



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>



i

THE CAPTIVE OF PEKIN

* * *

NEW 6/- NOVELS.

Crown 8vo, Art Linen, Gilt Top.

THE INN BY THE SHORE. By FLORENCE WARDEN, Author of "The House on the Marsh," etc. (Fourth Edition.)

THE POWER OF THE DOG. By ROWLAND GREY, Author of "By Virtue of His Office," etc. (Second Edition.)

BLACK DIAMONDS. By MAURUS JÓKAI, Author of "Midst the Wild Carpathians," "Pretty Michal," etc. (Third Edition.)

JUDY A JILT. By MRS. CONNEY, Author of "Pegg's Perversity," "Gold for Dross," etc. (Second Edition.)

LADY JEAN'S SON. By SARAH TYTLER, Author of "Lady Jean's Vagaries," etc. (Second Edition.)

COLOUR SERGEANT No. 1 COMPANY. By MRS. LEITH ADAMS, Author of "Bonnie Kate," etc. (Fourth Edition.)

THE GREEN BOOK. (Authorized Edition.) By MAURUS JÓKAI. (Fifth Edition.)

MY BONNIE LADY. By LESLIE KEITH, Author of "Lisbeth," "The Chilcotes," "In Spite of Herself," etc.

THE WINDS OF MARCH. By GEORGE KNIGHT, Author of "Dust in the Balance," "The Circle of the Earth," etc.

FORBIDDEN BY LAW. By MAJOR ARTHUR GRIFFITHS, Author of "Secrets of the Prison House," etc.

A STRONG NECESSITY. By ISABEL DON, Author of "Only Clärchen," "Zohrat," "The Story of Holland," etc.

PRETTY MICHAL. By MAURUS JÓKAI, Author of "Black Diamonds," etc.

JABEZ NUTYARD. By MRS. EDMONDS, Author of "Fair Athens," "The Herb of Love," "Amygdala," etc.

LONDON: JARROLD & SONS
10 AND 11 WARWICK LANE E.C.
And of all Booksellers







He marched stolidly forward.—p. 42.

THE CAPTIVE OF PEKIN

OR

A SWALLOW'S WING

BY

CHARLES HANNAN

AUTHOR OF "CHIN-CHIN-WA," "THE
WOOING OF AVIS GRAYLE," ETC.,
AND OF THE DRAMAS, "A HOUSE OF
LIES," "HONOUR AMONG THIEVES,"
"THE OPIUM EATER," ETC., AND PART
AUTHOR WITH WILSON BARRETT IN
"OUR PLEASANT SINS"



ILLUSTRATED BY A. J. B. SALMON

LONDON: JARROLD & SONS
10 AND 11 WARWICK LANE E.C.

ALL RIGHTS RESERVED

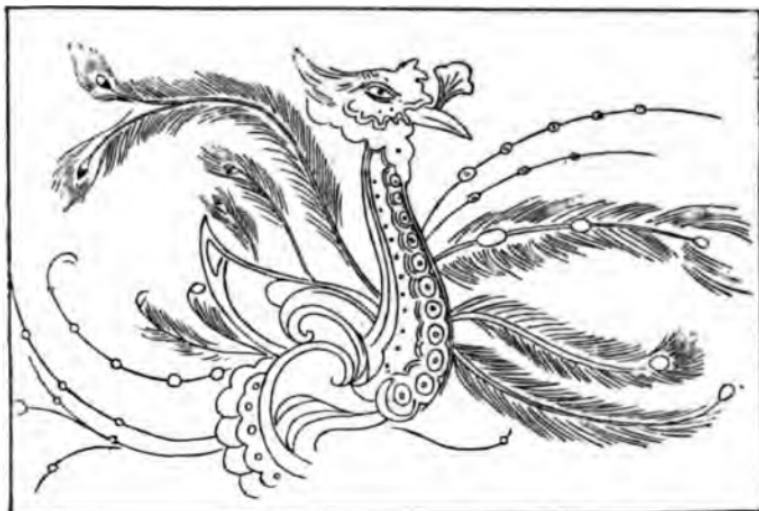
1897

21 + 84.45

3.00

0.00

9
20
)



CONTENTS.

| CHAPTER | PAGE |
|-------------------------------------|------|
| I. A CRY FROM BEYOND THE SEAS - | 13 |
| II. THE MAN WHO SENT FORTH THE CRY | 35 |
| III. IN THE HANDS OF THE CHINESE - | 47 |
| IV. THE MURDER OF THE PRIEST - | 68 |
| V. THE TORTURE OF THE MOLTEN LEAD - | 89 |
| VI. RESCUE NEARING PEKIN - - - | 104 |
| VII. THE EXILE CHIN CHIN-WA - - - | 118 |
| VIII. SEEKING A CLUE - - - | 130 |

CONTENTS.

| CHAPTER | | PAGE |
|---------|-------------------------------------|------|
| IX. | A RACE FOR LIFE - | 143 |
| X. | WITHOUT THE PEKIN WALLS - | 158 |
| XI. | THE SEARCH FOR THE CARTER - | 170 |
| XII. | CHIN-CHIN-WA AND SHAN-MIN-YUEN MEET | 187 |
| XIII. | COMMANDED TO LEAVE PEKIN - | 204 |
| XIV. | THE CAPTIVE FOUND - | 216 |
| XV. | CHIN-CHIN-WA ENTERS THE TEMPLE - | 232 |
| XVI. | PRIESTLY PLANS TO UNDERMINE A SOUL | 244 |
| XVII. | THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SILENT PRIEST | 257 |
| XVIII. | "TORTURE, BUT DO NOT KILL." | 273 |
| XIX. | THE BASTINADO - | 289 |
| XX. | THE TORTURE OF THE WHITE BIRD - | 307 |
| XXI. | THE RACE FOR THE TUNGCHOW GATE - | 318 |
| XXII. | HE CLUNG TO ME WHEN HE WAS DEAD | 335 |
| XXIII. | FAREWELL TO CHIN-CHIN-WA - | 351 |



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

| | PAGE |
|--|---------------------|
| ✓ HE MARCHED STOLIDLY FORWARD | <i>Frontispiece</i> |
| ✓ I REACHED OUT MY HAND, AND THE SWALLOW, MAKING NO MOVEMENT, BECAME MY CAPTIVE | 15 |
| I TOOK IT IN MY HAND AND OPENED IT CASUALLY | 23 |
| ✓ THE TWO BENT OVER IT - - - - - | 29 |
| ✓ SPRANG FORWARD AND SEIZED BY THE THROAT THE MAN WHO NOW STOOD AT THE DOOR - - - | 49 |
| ✓ LOOKING DOWN UPON HIM, THEY INDULGED IN A LENGTHY CONVERSATION - - - - - | 55 |
| ✓ HE DREW EVERY STROKE WITH THE UTMOST SLOWNESS - - - - - | 63 |

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

| | PAGE |
|---|------|
| ✓ YET AGAIN HE THREW THE COAT - - - | 73 |
| ✓ NORRIS HELD THE CORD AND FORCED THE MAN'S BODY FROM HIM WITH ALL HIS STRENGTH - - | 83 |
| ✓ ANOTHER FOE MET HIM FACE TO FACE - - | 87 |
| ✓ THE CHINAMAN APPROACHED HIM, AND BOUND HIM WITH ROPES - - - - | 96 |
| ✓ THE MEETING WITH CHIN-CHIN-WA - - - | 127 |
| ✓ I WAS COMPLETING MY TOILETTE UNDER CHIN-CHIN-WA'S DIRECTIONS - - - - | 178 |
| ✓ THE GUIDE FELL, IN FEAR, UPON HIS FACE - - | 183 |
| ✓ WE WERE WELCOMED BY A VERY OLD CHINAMAN A TALL MAN, IN RICH DRESS, SUDDENLY ENTERED | 190 |
| ✓ SEE, THERE IS THE PAPER FILLED UP - - - | 223 |
| THE MANDARIN APPROACHED AND STOOD OVER HIM - - - - - | 259 |
| ✓ NORRIS CAUGHT HIS ENEMY BY THE FOOT AND HELD ON - - - - - | 269 |
| ✓ THE BASTINADO - - - - - | 289 |
| CRUSHING BACK HIS HEAD WITH HIS LEFT HAND FIXED UPON THE FOREHEAD - - - | 359 |
| ✓ FAREWELL TO CHIN-CHIN-WA - - - - - | 361 |

INTRODUCTION.

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE THE EARL OF—
MY LORD,

It is my custom to write freely, and you, for one, are not amongst those who would deprive me of the liberty of my pen.

It is some months since you confided to me that portion of your diary which deals with your quest in the East, and I openly admit that I was at that time by no means enamoured of the gift.

You will pardon my frankness in stating the truth.

You, my lord, have never been subjected to the life of persecution which the fiction-writer must accept as his own. Diaries are thrust upon him from all sides; plots thicken around him; and anecdotes innumerable are related in his presence, in the hope that he may haply include them in some tale.

It was, therefore, more with the feeling of idle curiosity than with the idea of utilising your work that I cast my eyes over your lines; more with the

INTRODUCTION.

desire of noting the impressions you had formed of Eastern lands, familiar to me from the travels of my youth, than to glean what is commonly known as "copy" from the hasty perusal.

I have, however, your permission, my lord, to revise and publish your diary as I see fit; but the world is so overwhelmed with works of travel, that I have decided rather to extract the interest from your work in my own way; and whilst adhering only in part to the wording of your diary, I shall endeavour to accompany you throughout your wanderings, and to be with you in heart amidst scenes which you and I have looked upon, under circumstances strangely differing, in the years gone by.

And, lastly, as the tale with which you have entrusted me is known only to a few, I shall cover your identity with the cloak of fiction. You shall figure as a commoner, in place of a lord; for as it is the custom of the novel-writer to make a commoner a peer, so I, from perversity, find a malicious pleasure in reversing the order of things and taking my revenge upon you.

I have the honour to be, my lord,

Your lordship's most obedient servant,

* * *

THE CAPTIVE OF PEKIN.

CHAPTER I.

A CRY FROM BEYOND THE SEAS.

BRUSSELS, *April 22nd*.—A curious thing occurred this evening.

I was seated on the verandah, for the day had been more than usually warm for this season of the year, when my eye was attracted by a little bird that alighted first upon the parapet, and then, in a moment or two, almost at my feet. It was a swallow, and appeared to me to be in a sorry plight, worn out either by old age or lengthy travel, for its wing drooped upon the ground, and its eyes were half closed in weariness. I reached out my hand, and the swallow, making no movement, became my captive.

I was endeavouring to ascertain if it was wounded or how otherwise the bird came to be in such a condition, when my glance fell upon what I

discovered to be a fragment of paper, closely and firmly bound with thread around its leg.

"Here," I said to myself, "is an adventure: this swallow does not come to me by chance alone;" and thus thinking—for I confess I am of a somewhat romantic turn of mind, and that curiosity at once overcame me—I took my pen-knife and cut the threads—an operation of no small difficulty, as the bird struggled till the remainder of its strength was exhausted, and the missive was so closely and tightly wound, that there was the greatest danger of injuring the slender limb round which it had been secured.

Having finally succeeded, I wrapped the bird in my handkerchief, that it might not escape; and, proceeding to examine the fragments which I had detached, I found that I held in my hand what was evidently a small and torn paper, ragged and destroyed, partly perhaps from the attempts of the swallow to tear it from its limb, partly perhaps by the wear and tear of time.

Unfolding the fragments with great care, and piecing them together, I was delighted to discover that my momentary expectation had not led me far astray, and that the paper was actually covered with certain words written or rather scratched thereon, apparently in dark red ink. In all, the paper cannot have been more than an inch square, which yet contained in a small and clear handwriting—that of an Englishman—sufficient to give

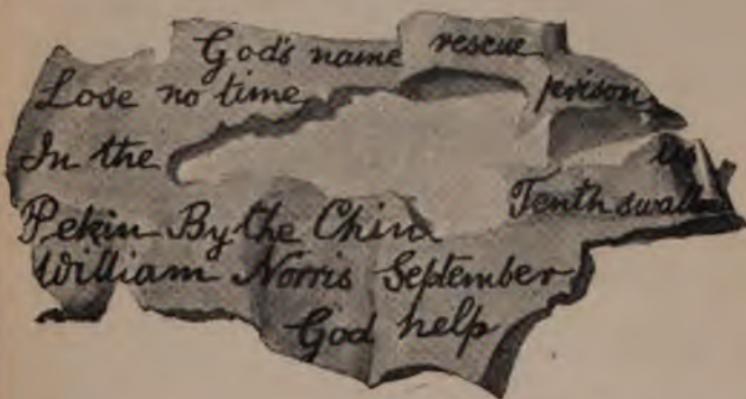


I reached out my hand, and the swallow, making no movement, became my captive.—*p. 13.*



me a clue to follow, were I ready to accept the mission now strangely brought before me: a message borne by a swallow's wing from far beyond the seas.*

After prolonged scrutiny, and the attempt to fill in such words as were missing, I made out the following to be the writing:—



Thus the centre part, which, from the folding, had come to be as it were a corner, and which evidently contained the full information necessary to explain the whole, was wanting. But the meaning of the missive was in a sense clear, although there were some points upon which I was unable to form a judgment. I shall point out what I mean, by repeating the words with the simple filling up of such gaps as may be easily supplied, thus:—

* This paper has been purposely reproduced by the artist on a somewhat larger scale.

In God's name rescue (me or us)
Lose no time (I or we) (am or are) prisoner (or s)
In the —— —— —— —— —— us in
Pekin By the Chin (ese) Tenth swallow
William Norris September (year and date missing)
May God help (me or us).

Thus the chief gap, which is the most important of the whole, lies in the third line. It is evident that some name is omitted. But what name? I have endeavoured to fill up by judging the length of the line, and by inserting the word "find" or "seek" before the final "us" thus :—

In the —— —— seek us in
Pekin;

but beyond this I cannot go.

My sensations, upon discovering the nature of the communication which had fallen into my hands by the strangest of coincidences, were beyond description. I was at once overpowered by wonder and a sense of the supernatural, and inflamed with an ardent desire to investigate and follow the matter to an end.

Looking more calmly upon the coincidence, as I now do some hours later, I am strengthened in the determination to add my links to the chain of destiny—a chain of which the swallow, perhaps for many a year, perhaps only for months, has borne the weight.

One of my fellows (perhaps more than one) has been, and it may be still is, confined by the Chinese, for some reason unknown, somewhere in or near Pekin. And of the messages which he has entrusted to many birds, as I gather from the words "tenth swallow," one at least has reached its destination—the hand of a brother-man.

I am young, wealthy, and free, and I accept the trust that has been thus strangely given to me; and if you are alive, William Norris, I shall come to you, ay, even at the risk of my own life.

I have longed for adventure, and the opportunity has come—an opportunity which no one could have foreseen.

Brussels, April 23rd.—The swallow died this morning. It appeared to be an old bird; but whether it be that it was so when this man in China attached the paper to its limb, or whether it has grown so during years in which it has flitted over the earth as the prisoner's messenger, I cannot tell. Was this message written years or months ago? I would give much to learn the date.

Brave bird! what fate carried you here to die? What can have brought you to me from a land thousands of miles away, except the guiding power of the God above? I have hopes, William Norris, that your message has not come too late. This morning I telegraphed to my oldest friend—the very man to go with me on an adventure or excursion of this kind. I have his reply before me now:

"Wait a month; impossible sooner. Will go to the end of the world with you then." I cannot wait a month. Every day is an eternity to William Norris. I shall go alone.

My intention, therefore, is to go to Pekin, and to find this man, wherever he may be, either by a prolonged search or by some miraculous intervention which shall enable me to fill in the missing words.

Who would have thought, two days ago, that I, Herbert Vanscombe, should have made up my mind (one usually of the dilatory order) to set off, at a few hours' notice, for the far-distant East? In four days I shall be on board the Messageries steamer, at Marseilles, and, if all be well, I calculate on being in Pekin within two months and a half from now.

A considerable journey for a lazy traveller who has never done more than lounge about the Continental towns!

Well, it could not have occurred at a more fortunate time. It gives me an object in life, at a time when I am sick of frivolity and cannot bear the idea of a London season.

I believe I should feel almost disappointed were any one to assure me now that William Norris has been dead for years; or were Norris himself to arrive in person to inform me that he had escaped. How selfish is the nature of man! Were not William Norris a prisoner of the Chinese and at

their mercy, my journey would have lost its zest, and the spirit of adventure would be gone.

It is difficult for a man to be honest to himself in thought.

* * * * *

En route eastwards to Pekin.—Life becomes a dull monotony at sea. There is nothing all around but the glassy wave and the unchanging blue of a heaven, pale with gazing at the reflection of its own loveliness. Occasionally a flying-fish or two will rise, and as swiftly disappear; else there is little but the regular beat of the engines, and the motion of the screw, and the silence of repose beneath the awning that stretches o'er the deck.

And thus it is, day after day, till one grows weary of the sameness of every hour. It is only in after years that the mind recalls these heavily delicious hours with a longing that they might be born anew.

* * * * *

I will pass over the days which were doubly, nay, trebly long to me, in that my impatience urged me on; and I will put aside the sense of aching pain which recurred to me when my mind recalled the quest upon which I was set, and when I realised that I was powerless and could do nothing for weeks to come. These weeks at sea

somewhat changed me. At the first blush I took the swallow's message as it came, as a coincidence—no more. I did not then realise how a fellow-man's life may lie in my hands, that I may save him, or leave him to die like a dog. I did not then accept the swallow's message so truly and deeply as I have done now.

After many, many days at sea—days longer to me, I suppose, than to any on board—I found myself at Shanghai—Shanghai, with its fine bund and its boulevard—the Paris of the East!

I spent several days there, for the chief reason that I was obliged to wait for a steamer to the North; but I did not count the time as wasted, for I had inquiries to make as to the man in search of whom I had come, and of whom I had been able to learn nothing in Hong Kong. It was but a chance that I came across his name, even in Shanghai.

My banker's introductions, which I had received by post at Suez, were useful in one sense, but practically of no use as regards the end in view. Without giving anyone the clue as to the object of my journey, I made inquiries everywhere as to the man whose missive I had received so strangely. No one knew him, even by name. This I was at a loss to understand, because, to reach Pekin, it was almost a necessity that he should have passed through Shanghai. I pondered much upon the subject, and came to the conclusion that the few



I took it in my hand and opened it casually.—p. 24.

words which I had carefully preserved must have been written many years ago, since no one could recollect having met or heard of the writer, or that he might have passed so rapidly through Shanghai as to leave no trace of his movements behind. It then occurred to me to examine the guests' book at the hotel. I took it in my hand and opened it casually, almost in despair of its proving of any avail.

I started involuntarily as my eye fell upon the page. By chance the book had opened at a date nearly a year previous, and before me was this entry :—

“William Norris, from Nagasaki, arrived 5th August; left for Pekin and Great Wall, 6th August.”

So there was a fair chance that I might be still in time!

Further than this I could learn nothing. They remembered Norris at the hotel—a tall gentleman, dark, and wearing a slight moustache. Had he ever returned? Perhaps; he might have gone to a friend's house or to the Club: he had not returned to the hotel.

I alone knew the truth, that Norris was a prisoner of the nation for which I had already conceived a hatred of the strongest kind—a nation which filled me with a sense of loathing, and from whom my inmost nature shrank. One thing was now made clear to me—that William Norris might

still be saved. I had never doubted of his existence. That had not struck me, strange as it may seem. I believed in his call for aid, and I was right. But—shall I confess it?—I had begun to despair when, first in Hong Kong, and then in Shanghai, I had been unable to discover any trace of him of whom I was in search; for I feared that the message might have been of such an ancient date that William Norris had succumbed already, perhaps, to a life of torture or to a lengthened imprisonment amongst his Chinese foes.

Now that I knew it to be a question of but a year ago, my desire to save him grew the stronger, since I perceived there was a chance. And often I wondered for what reason he had been seized: was it because of hatred for the European race upon the part of the Chinese; or had he desecrated some religious rites, or in what manner offended his cold-blooded foes?

On the day which remained before my departure for the North I lessened my baggage as far as possible, by the packing of all that I absolutely required in a single portmanteau and the committal of the remainder to the charge of the hotel. I was well armed, for I knew not what casualty might occur; indeed, I may say that, in addition to my own revolver I had three others, thus allowing, in case of need, for one apiece for three men, and, though it was possible that some of these weapons might prove superfluous baggage,

I had deemed it well rather to be over-equipped than the reverse. Further than this, I had two strong knives, of the nature of daggers; so that it will be seen that, in leaving Brussels, I had done so, not unprepared for the worst, if the worst should come.

There were two young fellows in Shanghai whom I had met, upon the first evening of my arrival, at the house of my banker, with whom I had dined. They were brothers; their names Frederick and James Dicey; and I took a liking to them from the first.

I decided to put before these men the particulars of the expedition upon which I was engaged, and accordingly I invited them to dine with me upon my last evening ashore.

I sent the "boy" from the room as soon as dinner was at an end, and then narrated to the two the incident of which you have already learned, as the cause of my presence in Shanghai.

"You are both," I concluded, "men whom I know that I can trust. One has a strange feeling, which is not exactly fear, but still something very closely akin, upon launching out alone on a venture of this kind. I may tell you plainly that I expect to be in Shanghai again within three months, accompanied by William Norris, for this reason, that the chain of fate, which brought the swallow with its message across the seas, will miss a link or two if I succumb to the death I may have to face. But,

all the same, I am prepared to die, and ready to do so, unless I succeed in escaping from the Chinese in company with William Norris."

Neither of the two answered me. I think, as men, they were touched with something of the same sorrow as had fallen upon me.

I relit my cigar.

"If you hear nothing of me in three months' time," I continued, endeavouring to lighten my tone, "will you make it public in Shanghai that two of your brother-Englishmen have disappeared in the North? Will you make a movement, no matter whether he and I be dead or alive, to seek us out? Will you do something for us here in Shanghai?"—in spite of myself, my voice was thick.

"We will," came the answer, as with one voice; and then Frederick, the elder, inquired, after a pause:

"Cannot we help you now? What is it you wish to be done?"

"I wish nothing" I replied, "until you hear from me, or until three months have passed without word. Stay, there is one thing. I want a boy who will act as my guide, who knows pigeon-English well (I'll manage with him somehow), and who knows Pekin. Can either of you procure me this? Do not think I run him into danger: if he is my guide, that is all; his Chinese skin protects him for the rest. Can I find such a man to-night in Shanghai, or shall I find him at Tientsin?"

"The remuneration must be large," said the elder.

"That is nothing: he may name his sum."

He rose, and summoning the boy, gave him instructions to find me a guide.

"Savey?" he said in conclusion.

"My can savey," came the answer; "chop-chop can do."

"Then you wish us," he continued, reseating himself, "to keep silence in the meantime regarding your journey?"

"I do."

"Is it necessary? Would it not be better to stir the colony now, if it is true, as I have little doubt, that this man is still kept a prisoner? There is many a man in Shanghai who would join you."

"I have little doubt of it, and, indeed, I have considered," was my reply, "doing what you suggest; and, were I to do so, trust me I should come to your brother and yourself in the first place, to ask for your assistance; but it must be remembered that as yet there is nothing to go upon. It is true that I know of Norris's imprisonment, but I do not know where he is confined; so that my journey resolves itself simply into a search (at any rate, at present) rather than a hostile affair with the Chinese as enemy. You will understand, easily enough, that I do not feel justified so far in calling for assistance; indeed, in a word,



The two bent over it.—p. 31.



I believe that one man is much more able to prosecute the search efficiently, and without exciting suspicion, than a band of half-a-dozen!"

I was right, and he knew it.

"Might we see the paper? Forgive my curiosity," said the younger. "I mean the paper brought you by the swallow."

"Certainly," I answered. "I was about to put it before you, in order to see if you could assist me in any way to fill the gaps."

I took it from the little box in which I kept it.

"There it is!"

The two bent over it.

"I see you have gummed it to a piece of card-board," said Frederick. "Is there nothing on the back?"

"Nothing," was my answer. "I did so to preserve it. Do either of you know Pekin?"

"No. I am afraid we shall be of little assistance to you. One moment: what is the meaning of the word 'us' in the third line? You have spoken as though there was one man only, this would indicate otherwise."

I answered him at once.

"You have formed the same opinion as I did upon first reading the few words. I have carefully studied the fragment since that time, and I shall tell you why I am of opinion that the first thought is in this case probably a wrong one. If we filled up this line by adding the word 'seek,' we decrease

the space which might contain a Chinese name to very small dimensions. Now, it is likely that the writer has, in these words that are missing, given very full directions as to his whereabouts, which he could not have done in the space we shall leave between the word 'the' and the word 'seek.' Again, look at the end of the second line; you will see that if we make the paper square, as it seems to have been, there is exactly room for us to insert 'er,' making 'prisoner,' but scarcely margin for the addition of an 's.' Then, and chiefly, we have 'William Norris,' followed by the date: no mention of other names. And finally, without giving you more lengthy and minor reasons, let me recall to you, if you wish further proof, that William Norris passed through Shanghai alone. My first reading was the simple one: 'In the ——, seek us in Pekin,' but later I put aside the word 'in,' and am inclined to treat this 'us' as a part of a word, of which the letters on either side are a-missing."

Even as I spoke, something told me that I had wandered into mere conjecture. I fell into a thoughtful fit; to tell the truth, I had not greatly considered this point until now. I had known that Pekin was my destination, and I had looked upon it as impossible to conjecture a word which would exactly fill this space. But now for a moment I began to think differently.

"Can either of you suggest a Chinese word

ending, say, with 'usi,' or 'usa,' or—well, I might go through the whole alphabet, gentlemen?" I asked.

But perhaps it is unnecessary to say that the riddle remained unsolved.

"And what, then, do you imagine," asked Frederick Dicey, a little later, "to have been the history of this paper?"

"Well, I think you see the whole; a man crying for rescue, in some place where he appears to have a certain liberty, in so far as he has been able to send this message. It is written, I conjecture, in blood, scratched upon the fragment of paper with something small and sharp like a pin. He has written a number such as this. We read it there, where he says, 'tenth swallow.' This is only one of many. If it is in Court grounds that he is a prisoner, I despair of rescuing him; but, at present, I shall say no more. Here comes the boy."

A short colloquy ensued; then James Dicey turned to me,

"He has found you a guide, and a good man too."

We sat late that evening—my last, as I have said in Shanghai; and I must confess that my mind was not a little relieved by the conversation, and possibly chiefly so from the knowledge that I was not merely following in the footsteps of William Norris, to disappear as he had done; or,

at least, that if I did so, there were those who would follow me to lay bare his fate and mine.

Four days later my guide and I had reached Tientsin.

CHAPTER II.

THE MAN WHO SENT FORTH THE CRY.

IT is now necessary to leave for a while the narrative as contained in the diary of Herbert Vanscombe, and to turn to events which took place nearly a year before that diary was commenced.

In the summer of 18—, exactly a year previous to the day on which Herbert Vanscombe landed in Shanghai, a man of grave appearance arrived in Yokohama by the San Francisco mail. It was his intention to proceed round the world at his leisure, and thus it was that, after several months in America, he landed in Japan. Whether it were from the fact that his disposition was a solitary one, or from the absence of introductions, that he toured alone amidst the glorious scenery and the idyllic peace of Japan, it is difficult to say. That such was the case is the material point.

He was bent upon travel of a prolonged nature, for the reason, which drives many a man from the dear old home—an unfortunate love. It had been a love affair; that is all with which we have to do.

Further than this, he was one who, at the age of twenty-eight, stood strangely isolated in the world ; for his father's death, months previous to his departure from home, had left him at once an orphan, and a wealthy idler to fill his time as he might please.

Such was William Norris.

It was natural that the lonely traveller should weary of the beauty of Japan. Thus it came that he decided upon making the excursion to Pekin. Passing rapidly through Shanghai—for by chance he was in time to catch a departing steamer for Cheso and Tientsin—he set out for the north. Hard travel he wished to have, and hard travel he believed he should find amongst the northern Chinese. He was right : there are but few places in the world where the means of travelling are so rough and crude.

There are several methods of traversing the distance of some eighty miles which separate the capital from its port : one by the river, which, winding to and fro through the flat country, approaches Pekin as it flows onward to the coast ; the others by road, which may be covered (to take the most luxurious and least used method first) in the mule litter, which is in the nature of a palanquin swung upon the backs of two mules, one of which precedes the other (those who have been in Bombay may recall a somewhat similar equipage borne by natives in place of mules.) In

this the traveller may recline, lounging, with a fair degree of comfort, for hour upon hour. Secondly, those who have frequent occasion to make the journey often do so upon horseback ;—and, lastly, there are the mule-carts—one for the traveller, one for his guide, small, cramped, and without springs—instruments of exquisite torture, and the most frequently utilised mode of transit between Tientsin and Pekin.

Travelling by the last-named by day and night almost continuously for two days, Norris arrived late upon the second afternoon, and indeed just before the closing of the gates, at the capital, worn out, as who could fail to be, with the prolonged jolting, the clouds of dust, and the heat of the Eastern sun.

At this point it becomes advisable to place before the reader's mind something in the nature of a sketch, however rough in outline and unfinished in detail, of the vast city of Pekin.

Pekin consists of three cities proper—the Imperial, the Chinese, and the Tartar—each severed from the other, and again from the world as a whole, by a wall whose vast grandeur must be looked upon to be conceived.

Within the outer walls the main features are dust and ruins, and a total absence of anything in the shape of order, amongst dwellings scattered here and there, often at wide and irregular intervals, and in streets the vast width of which is encroached

upon without let or hindrance by the booths and stalls of the poor.

To be in Pekin is to be in another world—a world which belongs to a far, far past, where one could almost imagine that the inhabitants have awokened after centuries of sleep, knowing nothing and conceiving nothing save the desolation which has become their home, and amidst which they are content to live.

There is one beautiful spot in Pekin—the marble bridge, where in summer the still, lotus-covered surface of the lake beneath is broken only by the occasional alighting of some curious bird. But even here the atmosphere of a bygone age lingers in the air, sobering all that is fair and beautiful with the silence of the touch of time.

The chief part of the Imperial City is sacred ground. The traveller is a rash man who ventures, by bribes, to enter its precincts ; for the northern Chinese are a hard, brutal race, not over-scrupulous in dealing with intrusions upon their rights. It stands in the centre of Pekin. For the rest, as isolated spots—isolated in the sense of separation from the encircling ruin—stand the foreign legations within their several walls ; and, lastly, the temples of the Chinese.

Two days sufficed to prove to William Norris that sight-seeing in the capital of China becomes tedious in the extreme. Distances are so great, that most of the traveller's time is expended in the

interior of the covered cart which conveys him at a snail's pace along the wide and uneven roads. Thus the morning of the third day found Norris leaving the city upon his way to the Great Wall.

That travelling in the interior of China, even at the present day, may be accompanied with danger few who know the nation will refuse to admit, and what it was not very many years ago those who have lived in China for any length of time will remember. Is there need to mention an individual instance? Let us recall Sir Harry Parkes; that name alone will suffice.

It is unnecessary to follow Norris in his journey, to alight with him at Wan-shou-shan, to stand with him upon the hill Yu-chuan-shan, or to enter with him the Great Bell Tower. Suffice it, that he reached Nankou, little of interest occurring to delay our narrative.

Nankou is a small village standing at the foot of the pass of the same name. Fifteen miles up the pass is the Great Wall separating Mongolia and China, a work of wonderful patience, twisting like a huge serpent over hill and dale till the eye loses sight of its meanderings amongst the mountains.

At Nankou itself there is a fragment of a minor wall still standing, through the gateway of which Norris, having finished such dinner as his guide had been able to provide, leisurely strolled, taking no account of the fact that he was then already at some distance from the Chinese inn. He was smoking—

a luxury the Englishman must have wherever he may be—and scarcely feeling inclined to sleep, notwithstanding the stiffness of his limbs from the cramped position necessary to maintain whilst travelling in the cart, he wandered onwards in the darkening evening, till it struck him that he was sufficiently far from the only tie between himself and civilization in this unknown land—his Chinese guide. He turned and began to retrace his steps.

Re-passing in a little time through the gateway in the wall, he noticed for the first time that the road here branched ; and that, whilst it had seemed a simple matter to gain the gateway from the inn, it now became a different question as to how to return. It was growing dark ; which of the three roads, he questioned, was he to follow ? Whilst he stood considering the point, a number of Chinamen, in all about two dozen, who were seated upon the bank of earth which time had formed against the wall on the left side of the gate, burst into uproarious laughter ; whether from the fact of the difficulty in which Norris apparently found himself, or at some remark regarding the European made by one of their number, it is impossible to say. Be that as it may, the laughter served to add to the annoyance of the situation. “ You fools ! ” Norris muttered, turning towards them, an epithet which it was perhaps fortunate no one understood.

One of the Chinamen leaped from the bank, a great broad-shouldered, strapping fellow—a man of

iron muscle, as these northern Chinese all are. "This way," he pointed with his hand, "this way ;" and Norris, fancying the man's disposition was friendly, followed him for a few steps, when renewed laughter caused him to stop abruptly. No ; clearly this was not his way. He turned immediately. With what intent, he questioned himself rapidly, had this man endeavoured to lead him astray ? His watch-chain hung across his white coat ; that was the only reason, so far as he could see, unless, indeed, the whole was done for jest.

For a moment he halted when he had regained the gate. He had no fear : a total absence of such feeling comes over a man when he has most need that it should be so. He stopped, that he might show those upon the bank that he was as cool as they.

The would-be guide was by his side in an instant. Norris turned on being touched upon the arm. "This way," the Chinaman pointed, choosing the second road ; for answer Norris raised his palm —he was unarmed, perhaps it was just as well—and with the back of his hand struck the Chinaman across the face. It was at once a dangerous and a rash act ; but Norris did not, till long afterwards, realise his peril, or the fact that he had then for the first time, nearly approached a death made horrible by Chinese cruelty and by the tortures which they well know how to use.

There was a shout of derisive laughter from the Chinamen upon the mound : perhaps to that alone did Norris owe his life ; for the man whom he had struck turned with expletives upon them, and then, following the Englishman, contented himself with walking by his side (whilst a crowd surrounded the two), slapping the prominent muscles upon his bare arms in attitude of defiance, as though daring the other, in childish fashion, to repeat his act. It is more than probable that Norris had recovered something of his common sense, for he marched stolidly forwards till, perhaps with a sense of relief, he recognised the mule-carts that stood in the courtyard of the Chinese inn.

He passed through them to his rough apartment unmolested.

It might be thought that such an incident as this would have been sufficient to convince the traveller that it is better to yield to than face the enemy in their own country—for enemies, one and all, the Chinese now became to Norris in his individual mind—but such was not the case, as will be shortly seen, and as may be conjectured from the fact of his summing up the whole matter in the half-expressed determination,

“ I must have a pistol with me next time, in case of such things occurring.”

The following day was spent on donkey-back ; up Nankou Pass to the Great Wall, and back, worn out with a long day’s work, to the inn at *Nankou*.

THE MAN WHO SENT FORTH THE CRY. 43

The next (on donkey-back again), to the Ming Tombs, with their wonderful approach, the avenue of animals, huge stone creations at even distances one from the other for the space of half a mile ; and then by cart to Pekin.

And now it was that Norris met with trouble.

After a day's rest, he decided, by his guide's advice, to return by river to Tientsin. Having considerably shortened his intended trip, he fixed upon this as a more pleasant method of travelling, when going to the coast, than the mule-cart.

This programme being decided upon, Norris instructed his guide to precede him, as is frequently done, by cart to Tungchow, a town several hours by cart from Pekin and situated upon the Peiho where that river approaches the capital.

Thus the guide was to leave at dawn, to proceed to Tungchow, and to have the house-boat hired and in readiness ; and Norris, whose carter the guide instructed, was to follow at a much later hour.

As he was finally dismissing the guide, Norris recollected a certain curio-store to which he was anxious to pay a second visit before leaving Pekin ; and accordingly he bade the guide instruct the carter to take him first to this curio-store, and thereafter to proceed to Tungchow. This command was given effect to, and all was arranged.

The guide left next day before Norris had awokened, and in due season the carter appeared.

The Chinese carter is a leaden-brained creature ;

his heavy eyes and deadly stolid look seem to denote the consumption of opium, and he is not of the class of men to whose intelligence it would be advisable to confide too much. However, notwithstanding sundry doubts as to whether the man was capable of recollecting instructions given the previous evening by the guide, Norris took his seat inside the cart, and, somewhat to his surprise, was conveyed to the curio-shop as desired.

Having completed his purchase, he re-seated himself in the cart, and, jolting along the streets, in what direction he knew not, came to the Temple of Confucius.

Now it had chanced that one day, upon his first arrival in Pekin, Norris had expressed a desire to enter this temple; but either from shortness of time, or for the reason that there were greater sights to see, his guide, after stopping for a moment to inform him of the temple's name, had returned to his cart and then passed on.

Coming upon it now, it struck Norris that it was a pity to leave Pekin, so to speak, half seen; and immediately stopping his cart, he conveyed to the driver by signs that it was his intention to enter the grounds of the temple for a short time.

There was little doubt but that the carter understood, and, indeed, having been in Norris's employment for a number of days, it would have been almost absurd to have questioned the point, so, without misgiving on this score, the Englishman

hastened away. An hour later cart and carter were still standing in the road, awaiting his reappearance. Three hours later the state of matters was the same, save that the leaden-brained driver had fallen asleep amongst his master's pillows in the interior of the cart.

Whilst the carter still slept, a Chinaman issued from the outer gates of the temple, and, recognising the position of affairs, took the small hand-bag, which was the sole remnant of his impedimenta that Norris had retained in sending his baggage in advance, and returned to the temple grounds.

Evening came; and the carter, awakened at length from his heavy and prolonged slumber, leisurely drove away, with what impression it is almost useless to conjecture. Perhaps he fancied that the day which had passed had been a dream; perhaps he thought he had done his duty, and need wait no longer; or perhaps he did not think at all, which seems most probable, judging from the fact that he returned forthwith to his own home, to live idly for many days upon the tiaos which he had earned during the past week.

Thus it came to pass that the only connection which had existed between William Norris and the outside world at the time of his entering the Temple of Confucius was silently broken and destroyed.

And the guide at Tungchow?

He returned to Pekin two days after—returned

to find it impossible to trace his master, and, after some days, to realise the uselessness of his attempts.

The carter had disappeared. To find such a man in such a city was an almost impossible thing ; besides, to the guide's thinking, both master and carter had disappeared together.

Then he went to Tientsin, half expecting to find that they had arrived there before him, but such was not the case.

And then, gradually, a whisper of the story of the Englishman's disappearance with his carter went abroad, and as gradually, but more effectually, the story died away.

CHAPTER III.

IN THE HANDS OF THE CHINESE.

THE Temple of Confucius consists, as is the case with most of the temples of the Chinese, of several buildings which are enclosed within the sacred ground.

That part which fronts the road has a fine terrace, looking down upon an avenue of grand old pines whose shadows beat heavily upon the ground.

Through this building Norris passed into the precincts beyond. He was already accompanied by three Chinamen, whose attentions were somewhat troublesome, as he did not understand their tongue.

These men were apparently desirous of acting as guides.

Following his own pleasure, rather than their will, Norris strolled onwards in the direction in which they would have led him. Having in a measure, satisfied his tourist spirit of curiosity by entering and examining several buildings, he was about to return, when one of the Chinamen, whose numbers

had by now increased to seven, stepped somewhat roughly in front of him, barring his passage, and giving him to understand (as Norris conjectured from previous experience) that some few tiaos were required as recompense for the permission to enter and examine the temple. He chanced to have some Pekin notes in his possession, and producing a couple, he handed them to the man.

Instantly a Babel of voices ensued, the men crushing round him, each arguing and quarrelling with his fellows. On the moment it flashed across Norris that this might prove an awkward affair. He was unable to understand the language. His guide was at Tungchow; his carter was outside; what was he to do? And he recollects suddenly that he had not yet carried out his intention of adding the weight of a pistol to his light Eastern dress.

So far as he now saw, the only thing to be done was to distribute the remainder of the notes in his possession. He did not know their value; one might be for two tiaos, the next for five, for aught he could say; and the distribution did not appear to be satisfactory. He now perceived danger very near, and calculated his chances rapidly. Two of the Chinamen were struggling with each other—his division of the spoil had been unequal. Of the others, three were in front of him, and one on either side. In the first instance he determined to test the matter, to ascertain exactly how the land lay.



Sprang forward and seized by the throat the man who now stood at the door.—*p. 51.*



Making a few steps forward, he sought to push his way through the men. The result of this was that one of them immediately turned, and, running rapidly ahead, closed the doorway, the back entrance to the building through which he had first to pass. This was scarcely done before Norris, recognising his danger, and thinking that immediate action only could avail, made a sudden bound forward, dashed two of the Chinamen from before him by the suddenness of his attack, and eluding the others, sprang forward and seized by the throat the man who now stood at the door.

So unexpected was the attack, that the Chinaman staggered for a moment. Exerting his whole strength, Norris took advantage of the momentary opportunity, and, thrusting back his foe, stood a free man—for half a second—and, had not the door been closed, would have escaped.

The others were upon him now ; one clasped him round the neck, another held him by the leg. The struggle became that of the one against the many, the one fighting desperately, hand and foot—ay, and teeth too—for dear liberty and life, the others slowly crushing out his strength.

* * * *

When Norris came to his senses, a feeling of utter weariness seemed to have settled upon him. His brain moved slowly.

Recollection was almost entirely dimmed, and it was some little time before he realised the position in which he was now placed. Slowly he began to recall the terrible struggle through which he had passed, and to awake to the deadened pain in his wrists and ankles, for he was now bound hand and foot. He sought to move, but found that his neck and feet were secured, apparently to pegs which had been driven into the ground. The horror of the situation flashed upon him. He lay at the mercy of the Chinese—a race of whose hideous instincts he had already seen something, and conjectured more. He was their captive, separated for ever from the outside world, unless, vain hope! his carter or his guide should summon aid. And now what was to be? Allowing the possibility of the arrival of assistance, such might come too late. Hideous tortures might be in reserve for him. Long before release came, his death might have been silently accomplished. His mind exaggerated its own fears, and he lay prostrate, filled with dread forebodings of what might be in store.

With an effort he sought at length to thrust aside thoughts of this nature. He was no coward, and it now behoved him to regain to the full his presence of mind; yet, without doubt, the situation was such as might cause the bravest to despair.

Looking around him as far as he was able, for his neck was tightly secured to the ground, as were also his feet, he saw that, lying where he now was in

the open air and in the shade of a tree, he had apparently been carried some distance from the spot where, in the struggle to escape, he had lost consciousness in the end. He was now in what appeared to him to be a large courtyard, from which, so far as he could judge, there would have been but faint chance of escape, even had his bonds been removed ; for he was shut in upon all sides by buildings and by walls, high and insurmountable.

It was here, though he knew it not, that he was destined to come, in the after-days, to long for death, and to long in vain.

How long he had been lying thus bound Norris was unable to say. That he must have been unconscious for a very long period, he judged roughly from two facts : the first, that the sun appeared to be sinking ; and the second, that he was alone, for he rightly conjectured that had he regained his senses at an early period, some of the Chinamen would probably have still been with him, waiting for his return to life. As it was, they had possibly grown weary of waiting.

Some half-hour must have passed whilst Norris lay thus, reviewing the situation, and giving vent to an occasional groan owing to the pain of his stiffened limbs, when two of his captors returned.

Looking down upon him, they indulged in a lengthy conversation which Norris would have given much to have understood. The one China-

man appeared to be endeavouring to convince the other upon some point, and the other to be unwilling to be so convinced. Probably, as Norris grimly conjectured, the method by which his death was to be finally attained was the subject of their discussion. Still engaged in heated argument, they left him ; and in a little, whilst Norris wondered painfully as to what was to be done, one of the two returned with a dish in his hand and a pair of chopsticks. Instantly a wild hope filled Norris : he was to be fed. Why ? What did they intend to do ? Why give him the wherewithal to support life, unless it were that he was to be allowed to live ? And then almost as suddenly came a wave of despair : they would feed him, perhaps, to-day merely to give him strength to meet their hideous lingering tortures : he had heard of such things ; it might be so.

The Chinaman unbound his neck and motioned to him to sit up ; then making numerous signs that escape was an impossibility, and that Norris need make no attempt in that direction, he unbound his hands, placing thereafter the dish of food—Chinese food, a filthy mess of rice and greens—beside him on the ground ; then he stood stolidly to watch all that Norris might do.

Three others now approached, and the four stood curiously regarding the Englishman ; whilst he in wonderment sat looking up at them. This treatment was favourable ; what could it mean ? Yet



Looking down upon him, they indulged in a lengthy conversation.—p. 55.



how could it be favourable, if he were to be kept a prisoner? He was at a loss what to think.

Meantime the point as to whether he should or should not eat called for immediate decision. His hunger was considerable; but his hands were so numbed by their recent bonds as to be quite useless for a little time to come. When he regained their use, should he eat this mess of Chinese food that sickened him to look upon, hungry though he was? There were reasons for and against. If he were to be kept a prisoner, then he must eat sooner or later; and the sooner he did so with a good grace, the sooner possibly would he succeed in conciliating his captors. But if, on the other hand, he were to be fed merely that he might be able to bear the cruelty of a lingering death, he felt but little inclined to accept the attentions of those who stood before him. Bah! it could make little difference, he thought: he would trust to the future. Torture could not be greatly increased by the return of his strength. So he reached out and took the bowl in his weak hands, swallowing a full half of its contents, and finding the food not quite so objectionable to the palate as he had conceived it to be.

When he had finished, the Chinaman who had brought the food made a sign that he should lie down again; but this he was unwilling to do, and endeavoured to explain by gesticulations that he preferred a sitting posture. The man seized him

by the throat for answer, and thrust him back, knocking his head with rough severity upon the hard ground ; for Norris was now so weak he could make but faint resistance. A moment or two more and he lay as he had lain previously, bound so securely that he could scarcely move.

Thus he remained through the entire night—a night which Norris never forgot in after-years—a night of clear cloudless sky, whence the millions of stars shone pitilessly upon the man who could not sleep ; whilst he lay looking up to them, groaning in his agony of unchanging posture, his brain filled with a darkness which seemed to give the lie to his soul of the existence of a God, for his thoughts had become as a hell of hideous things.

Then, after hours of seemingly endless night, came the grey of the dawn ; and at last the man slept a sleep whose images but reflected the horror of his waking dreams. When he awoke the sun was well up, though the morning was still young. His limbs, from the night's exposure upon the cold ground, seemed to have grown as a piece of the earth upon which he lay, so cramped and still and deadened had they become : to move at all was agony ; to lie still the only chance of rest—if rest, under such conditions were possible.

At last, two of his captors came ; and, perceiving his condition, one of them loosed all his bonds, head and feet and hands ; but Norris simply lay still, unable to move, and it was some hours

before he recovered so far as to be able to sit up and partake of food. During these hours he fancied he was alone ; for the Chinaman, who had placed a dish beside him, had sat himself down thereafter, behind the Englishman, so that Norris was not aware that he was watched.

Gradually, as in the warmth of the day he recovered the use of his limbs, the aching thought filled him that escape was impossible, even though he were, as he believed himself to be—alone. The power of his body was still so weakened that he could scarcely move. When, at length, he succeeded in conveying the contents of the bowl to his mouth, he felt somewhat the better for the food ; and, as the day wore on, recovered his strength, in so far that he was at length able to stand up, though reeling as he did so like a drunken man.

The Chinaman was watching him curiously, well knowing that Norris's strength was for the time being as nothing ; and that even putting that fact aside, escape would have been an impossibility. Norris started when he perceived that he was not alone ; the Chinaman who was seated smoking, was to all appearance, much interested in the movements of him whom he had evidently been set to watch. Very soon Norris became convinced that escape from the place where he now found himself was an impossibility ; to scale the wall, even given that he should at some future time be left alone, appeared

beyond the power of man ; to pass the buildings even more so ; and further, his temporary freedom from his bonds would, in all probability, be of the shortest duration. His feelings were a mixture of agony and despair.

The hours passed with leaden step. Towards afternoon the first clue as to the reason of his imprisonment was given to him. Several Chinamen had come into the place of his captivity. One of these taking a paper from the purse which he wore underneath his garments, handed it to Norris, who, upon unfolding it, read with the greatest surprise these words, written clearly in English, " You write note, make pay any man ten Englishman's hundred pounds."

Where had this paper been obtained ? Clearly it had been written by a Chinaman knowing something of the English tongue, and knowing it, too, not merely as a guide might know it, in the most childish form of pigeon-English.

" You write note, make pay," these words struck Norris at once. Little as he knew of pigeon-English, it flashed across his mind that his guide, for instance, would rather have said something like, " You makey write some piecey note, belong can makey pay."

Such was his thought ; and he continued to follow the train of conjecture instantly suggested to him when his eye had fallen upon the paper.

" Ten Englishman's hundred pounds!"—one

thousand pounds: a large ransom—more than these men who stood around would think of exacting.

One of the Chinamen interrupted his thoughts, pointing with his finger to the writing, as though demanding an answer. But the paper which had been given to him was not one which could be replied to off-hand. In the first place, what was required? "Make pay any man,"—what was the meaning of this? He had no English bank-notes with him, and the writer of the paper must have been aware that everything of a valuable nature, watch, chain, pencil, knife, etcetera, had been stolen from his person. Yes, everything, save (for somehow his finger wandered idly down the inside of his coat) a couple of English pins, which he had idly placed there two days ago, to be used, perhaps, as substitutes for the buttons of his clothing, which were constantly giving way.

It was evident, therefore, that the only thing which he could give, and the only thing which could be intended, was a note to, or a cheque upon, his bankers. Did the writer know of the English form of issuing cheques? If so, who was he?—in what position? These were points the consideration of which set Norris's brain on fire.

The Chinaman pointed impatiently a second time to the paper. Norris could hesitate no longer. A vague hopefulness filled him. He was, as he knew, in the remote interior of the Temple of

Confucius ; but already a chance was given to him of communicating with some one (who, at least, knew his language) in the outside world, be it only in Pekin.

Rapidly he made signs that he required to write. The Chinamen understood at once, and one of them hurried off to seek what was required. Evidently they knew what Norris had been asked to do. In a moment or two the man returned with the materials used by the Chinese in writing—a brush, a pot of ink, and paper.

Norris was obliged to place these upon the ground, calculating all the time as to what he should write. Then he took the brush in his hand and dipped it in the ink, whilst the Chinamen crushed around him in curiosity, chattering in their ugly tongue to one another. He drew every stroke with the utmost slowness, for each stroke gave him the longer time to think as to how he was to complete his reply. This is what he wrote :—

" I am your prisoner. If I pay one thousand pounds, am I free ? My money has been stolen. All I can give is a letter to my bank to pay one thousand pounds. If I do this shall I be set free at once ? "

It was short, yet he thought sufficiently explicit. He had learned in bygone days, that it is well to cut a letter short, in case of doubt, so as to convey

something of one's own doubt to the other side, if it be possible, by an atmosphere of brevity.

He folded the sheet, and gave it to the man who brought him the materials wherewith



He drew every stroke with the utmost slowness.—p. 62.

to write. The recipient's first proceeding was to re-open and scrutinize the sheet, notwithstanding that he had been carefully observing Norris as he

wrote ; and this act was of itself sufficient to prove to the Englishman that none of those present could read his words. Then the men left him, still apparently discussing what was to them a strange and curious thing. One of them stayed a moment to lift the ink-pot and the brush. And, at last, Norris was left alone—truly alone, for his guardian had accompanied the others through the doorway, which they had then closed and barred. Clearly they had no fear of his escape ; his bonds must have been merely to restrain him from violence ; and clearly, also, it was judged that the paper borne away was that required—the equivalent of the demanded thousand pounds. As Norris thought of this, it struck him that if the men believed this note to be what was required, he should in justice have been at once set free. Why, then, was he still a prisoner ? These men had received, to their belief, what they desired, and still he was not free. And he remembered the treachery and the greed of the nation, whilst an aching, hopeless pain gnawed at his heart. Suppose he should give this thousand pounds unconditionally, would the amount satisfy his captors ? —would it not serve to increase their avarice ? Would they be content with this, or would they not rather bleed him of his whole fortune, and then perhaps kill him by cruel tortures, in the endeavour to force more when there was nothing left ?

The position in which he was placed seemed to increase in horror at each new move. One thing

was evident, he must not pay this thousand pounds, even with the promise of freedom : it but opened paths which led to fresh danger and to new terrors in the end. For how could he believe that the unknown writer of this paper could be trusted for a moment to fulfil a promise ? His very method of treating his prisoner (or the temple's prisoner) proved his cowardly longing for gain. Who was this man ?—who could he be ?

At this point conjecture became vague, and, returning upon his thoughts, Norris decided that he should endeavour by craft to undermine his unknown enemy's intent ; for craft was surely justifiable in such a case.

If the answer to his letter came, "Yes, you will be instantly set free upon giving me a letter to your bank," then he would give such a letter, but —sign it with a false name ! And if he were set free, well he would then consider how far he was bound in honour to pay this thousand pounds and to take up the false order upon his bank ; and if, as he was the rather inclined to fear, the promise should prove as nothing, then at least, he should not have given the first taste of blood to the wolves ; and who could say, but that the false order might lead some day to his discovery and escape ? This seemed the wisest, indeed, the only course to pursue.

Having come to this decision, Norris proceeded to examine the note which had been sent to him,

and which he still held in his hand. It was written upon paper of foreign make—English or German, not Chinese ; and this struck him as curious, in so far that a Chinaman, unless of some high rank, would be unlikely to indulge in a luxury such as the using of paper other than Chinese. As he looked upon it, the thought came to him that, by carefully preserving this paper, there was a dim chance of his tracing the man who had written the words. That he was not an Englishman was evident, alike from his diction and writing—even putting aside the connection with his captors and the fact that one thousand pounds would have been but a small demand from one of his own race —so there was, indeed, but a faint possibility of ever ascertaining who had penned the lines. Notwithstanding which, Norris determined to carefully preserve the sheet.

The time seemed to pass rapidly so much was there to ponder upon ; and although the sun was setting, and, in reality, more than two hours had passed when the answer to his note arrived, it seemed to Norris that his captors had scarcely left him ere they again returned. Yet his impatience as to the reply was none the less strong, in that he had been considering every point regarding the demand which had been made. In a second of time his eyes had perused the lines now placed before him. And this was the answer to his note :—

[REDACTED]

IN THE HANDS OF THE CHINESE. 67

"Write bank make pay; then you go free. Write, pay any man."

The reply was what Norris had anticipated. He should be free so soon as he gave the necessary letter to his bank—a letter which the recipient had apparently some means of disposing of. Now the question came to be, "Was this promise to be relied upon, or not?" A few hours more would test the case.

Writing materials were again placed before him. He headed the sheet to his English bankers, and, endeavouring to disguise his hand, he wrote :—

"Pay to bearer the sum of one thousand pounds sterling, for which I shall acknowledge this order as full receipt."

And he signed,

"ALBERT H. DYSON."

The Chinaman took the sheet from his hand, and once more Norris was alone.

CHAPTER IV.

THE MURDER OF THE PRIEST.

A SECOND night of Norris's captivity had passed. During this night he had been free to walk about, for his bonds were now removed. Every hour that passed had been filled with anxious expectation. Though it seemed useless to hope, he did still hope, waiting through the long night hours for that liberty which he had virtually bought, though upon the dismissal of his second note, nothing had happened, save that a large bowl of food had been handed to him a short time thereafter.

During the night hours, Norris endeavoured to convince himself that liberty must surely come with the morning. His note had been dispatched too late the evening before, he argued ; and thus he sought to silence his fears.

Once he wildly thought of endeavouring to escape. Alas ! escape was impossible. The tree, his only chance, stood many feet removed from either wall or temple on every side.

Nor did he sleep, worn out though he was with long-protracted fatigue and agony of mind.

When day came, still hour after hour went by. The Chinaman resumed his post of watch for a lengthy period, but there were no signs of liberty after all ; and it was with a sense of thankfulness that Norris recollects that he had acted prudently and had not trusted to the word of his unseen foe.

It was now quite apparent that one thousand pounds would not purchase his freedom from the Temple of Confucius in Pekin.

It crossed his mind, that perhaps the man who had demanded the note of hand had been suspicious on account of his readiness in sending. Yes ; undoubtedly there he had been a fool. Perhaps, by his haste, he had lost the chance of liberty—a liberty which might have been his, had he refused, and waited to endure torture before yielding to the demand for a ransom so large.

As it was he now faced the weary expectancy of an imprisonment which might never end, until death, by what means to be finally reached God alone could know, should set him free.

This was the position in which Norris now found himself to be placed ; for it is almost needless to say, that hour followed hour, and day succeeded day, without the fulfilment of the promise made by the unknown receiver of the false order upon the English bank.

Norris was allowed a degree of freedom ; he was fed, and had moderate liberty, in so far that he was no longer bound, and that he had a large space to

walk in. Further than this, it was so impossible to escape from the temple, that it was but seldom indeed that the Chinamen troubled themselves to set a watch upon his movements.

Thus confined, Norris cast about in his own mind as to how it might be possible for him to communicate with his fellows. He had valuable possessions—possessions whose worth he had not till now realised, and these were comprised in the power and the ability to write, since he possessed the necessaries to do so. For some days he had been unaware that this was so; but in his solitary captivity it was not very long ere his mind grasped a truth that was encouraging to him when known.

He had paper—the margin paper of both the letters which he had received from his unknown enemy: it was little, yet for him much—ay! very much, for by the scarcity of an article we learn to value what we possess. For pen, he had two pins—one would have sufficed—the only trifles which his captors had left upon his clothing. For ink, was there not his blood?

But these possessions were little without the knowledge as to how he might apply them. A wild idea of casting over the wall small messages, tied to twigs with threads plucked from his clothes, suggested itself to him; but of what use could this be, as the dust without would cover them?—and if, indeed, by any chance one should reach a human hand, that hand would be Chinese.

Then a still wilder idea of capturing the swallows that ever and anon crossed the court came to him, and then despair that his chances were so few cast its shadow upon him for many days.

Whilst he was still buried in despondency, it so chanced that two of the birds upon whose aid he had calculated with a wild madness for a moment or two, some days since, met in conflict in the air above him, and, whilst he watched them, both dropped towards the ground, finally falling in the court.

The feelings that filled him—wild hope, intense longing, terrible excitement—few can understand.

To secure one of these swallows !

His heart burst within him in wild prayer.

He approached the birds. One flew off ; the other was so wounded and torn as to be unable to rise upon its wing, though it fluttered wildly and struggled vainly to rise from the ground.

Norris could have counted his heart-beats. Hastily taking off his coat, he threw it twice over the bird which now fluttered along the ground. Each time in his terrible excitement he missed it. Yet again he threw the coat.

Indescribable joy filled him as he perceived that the swallow was beneath ; then carefully he secured it in his hand and set about examining the wound. The bird was but little hurt.

Considerably less than half an hour later a small piece of paper lay before him, with some words

upon it written in his blood. The swallow was securely wrapped in his coat. Thread he had procured from the rough edge of his clothes. All that now remained was to fasten the paper to the swallow's neck, or, better still, he thought, round its leg, and then to throw the bird over the wall, in the hope that it might by some chance bear his message beyond the seas.

He folded the small paper carefully, and as carefully replaced the pin in the inside of his coat.

The only traces that remained of his experiment at this juncture were the presence of a thread upon the ground, a small folded paper, which for the moment he held between his teeth, and the swallow wrapped inside his coat.

He reached out and took the bird gently in his hand.

At the same instant the door of the temple facing him opened, and two of his Chinese captors appeared.

One of these men instantaneously perceived the bird. The utmost danger faced the Englishman. His lips had closed over the fragment of paper held in his teeth. The bird was the suspicious point. If he hesitated, the bird would be taken from him, and these men would begin to question how and why it had come to be in his possession, and to ask what he had intended to do.

He knew that one of the Chinamen saw the



Yet again he threw the coat.—p. 71.



swallow. To conceal it, or attempt to conceal it was ruin.

Never did Norris experience such a moment of intense agony of rapid mental calculation, as now.

The Chinaman spoke to his companion ; both had now seen the bird ; and Norris, acting like a cold, dead thing that scarcely knew what it was doing, took the struggling swallow in both his hands and tore it wing from wing, thrusting the living flesh and the warm feathers in a hideous pretence between his moving teeth.

His heart stood stone still ; but the Chinamen saw him eat the living bird, and by that he was saved !

* * * * *

It had become fully evident to Norris that his freedom was not likely to be given to him, and that only captivity and death were before him.

That his life would be spared for some time to come he could well understand, since by killing him all prospect of further monetary extortion would disappear. It seemed, however, probable that so soon as the order upon his bankers was returned unpaid and known to be a forgery upon his part, his captors would be so much enraged as to proceed to extremes immediately, as soon as they became aware of the deceit practised. In the meantime, if he were pressed for further sums, he decided that

he should, after holding out as long as possible, give as many further orders as might be necessary, signed with the false name.

As the first of these orders had to go to England before his trick would be discovered, and as the news that it had been refused payment would take equally long of transit, Norris calculated that even supposing it had been sent by camel-post overland to St. Petersburg, a means frequently employed by those living in Pekin, he might look upon it as a certainty that the reply regarding the order would not reach Pekin for probably four months to come.

At the expiry of that time he foresaw certain death—a death of the most horrible nature, unless his escape should be effected meantime.

Some days had passed ere he had been able to partially forget the horror of the moment when, with the two men in front of him observing his every act, he had been forced to destroy, whilst he acted a hideous part, the only living tie between himself and those beyond the walls; and many, many hours had sped ere he could touch the food placed at regular intervals before him.

A couple of rough skins, thrown upon the ground at the foot of the tree by one of his Chinese captors, on the day following that on which he had signed the letter required, were an indication, Norris took it, that although he remained a prisoner, he was not to be ill-treated.

Thus was his life—by day, pacing to and fro in his place of confinement, living upon Chinese food, and pondering vaguely upon the dim chances of escape—by night sleeping, or when he could not sleep, gazing towards the stars as he lay upon the skins.

A week went by uneventfully, and Norris still remained captive, as far removed from liberty, so it seemed, as on the first day of his confinement.

He rarely saw his captors ; their curiosity regarding him was satisfied long ago, and seldom did any of them enter his open-air prison save to give him food.

Several ideas suggestive of escape had occurred to Norris—one that he should scale the wall by the arduous fabrication of holes in its surface, whereby he might, with difficulty mount to the top. But there were reasons to bar this gate of hope : the holes in the wall would at once catch the eye of the man who brought him his food ; and again, he might, indeed, succeed in making stepping-places to a certain height, but beyond that, beyond his reach whilst standing on the ground, how was he to do so ?

This, like many another idea, had to be abandoned ; for Norris well knew that once his captors perceived any possibility of his escaping, he would immediately be transferred to another place, or possibly chained, either to the wall or to some huge stone, as he had seen the Chinese

prisoners chained. Then, indeed, the last ray of hope would have gone! And so, urged by extreme caution not to hazard a failure, he waited, eagerly examining the while every loophole of escape.

At length he was in part rewarded, for he perceived that the man who brought his food was growing more careless, and would at times leave the door behind him half open when he entered from the temple. Norris determined to act upon this. The Chinaman must be overpowered silently and quickly.

Norris had no weapon. Without such his hands alone were not sufficient to do the deed at once and with absolute silence and rapidity; so he set about carefully twisting a species of rough cord, or thong, which he made from strips bitten or torn with his teeth from the skins furnished him to sleep upon—a tedious process indeed. These he twined and knotted tightly together. This he did chiefly by night; and on the second day following his resolution to overpower the Chinaman, he was in readiness to seize his opportunity. He now had a noose, which it was his intention to cast over the man's head, to strangle him thus by drawing it tight from behind, whilst his knee should be placed against the victim's back.

Such was his crude idea; but the opportunity of carrying it out was not given him for a number of days, for by some chance the man who came was accompanied by another from this time forth.

To Norris, in his despair, it seemed as though each possibility of escape were flaunted in irony before him only to elude him when he would have seized upon it.

In his bitterness he recalled the incident of the swallow. Strangely enough, he had looked upon this hope as ended at the time ; now he began to think differently. The Chinamen had seen him eat the living bird ; why should not he trade upon that fact ? There were many nests along the eaves of the temple. Could he but reach these to capture the birds, he might still succeed in the carrying out of the old design. And if he were caught in the attempt ; what matter ? Was it not as food that he sought to secure the birds ?

During the night-time he broke from the tree, climbing it with cat-like caution in order to do so without noise, several branches, which, being pieced together and tied with pieces of cloth torn from various parts of his clothing, proved, although slender, sufficiently long to reach to the swallow's nests.

At first it was his plan to disturb the birds, and to strike them with his slender rod, as they issued from their nests ; but putting aside the difficulty of such a proceeding, there remained the probability of so injuring them, that they must prove useless ; whilst, on the other hand, his weapon might snap in the air, from its unwieldy length, at every attempt he made. Abandoning this idea, he determined to

endeavour to form of his coat a species of net, and, rough and crude as the plan may seem, it was by this means that he ultimately succeeded in capturing, at long intervals it is true, and in the face of continued and frequent disappointment, several of the swallows as they issued from the eaves of the temple.

By day he was the possessor of a number of short sticks, which he concealed with difficulty from the sharp eyes of the Chinaman who brought his meals. At night he pieced these together—an arduous process nightly to be undergone—and then with his light coat simply extended by means of a transverse stick at the top, somewhat as it might have hung on the back of a chair, he made his round of the swallows' nests, covering each with the coat whilst he endeavoured to disturb the birds, when, withdrawing it a moment that they might issue from their nests, he would rapidly endeavour to bring them in collision with the coat on the chance of their falling thus entangled to the ground.

Many a weary and hopeless hour did he spend in this pursuit. It seemed beyond his power to catch the swallows. Such as struck against the coat immediately thereafter escaped; and Norris noticed that the birds appeared to be growing less in numbers, as though he frightened them from their homes. Accordingly he devoted himself entirely to one side of the court, lest he should frighten

the whole of the birds before he should become sufficiently practised to secure them.

As the human mind will overcome all difficulties through time, so Norris overcame that which had at first seemed insuperable, and one morning in the early dawn he caught his first bird.

From this time forth it became easier; many escaped, and disappointment followed disappointment, notwithstanding which he secured an occasional bird, and these he liberated with the brief message and cry for aid written in blood and bound to the leg, in the hope that some of his English fellows would hear the cry.

In this manner he caught and liberated ten swallows as the days went by. Once he recaptured one of his birds with the paper tied to its leg—a disappointment of the severest kind, for if the birds were to linger in the Temple of Confucius for ever all had been done in vain.

The eleventh bird was in some way slightly hurt in capture, besides being evidently young, and to Norris's dismay it proved unable to fly freely, settling instead upon the roof of the temple.

The sun was already advancing in the heavens, and he knew that shortly he might expect his first instalment of the day's food to arrive.

He had spent a long time, on the morning in question, before finally succeeding in capturing one of the birds, and the disappointment on finding that it could scarcely fly was indeed severe.

In his present state of mind it seemed to him that the presence of the swallow upon the roof was most dangerous, and, late in the morning though it was, he hastened to re-piece the stick (he had some time since taken it to pieces), in order to reach the bird and bring it to earth a second time, so that he might throw it thereafter beyond the high wall.

He recaptured it without much difficulty ; and so intent was he upon the subsequent action of undoing the knots which secured the sticks, that he did not realise for a moment or two that time had passed more quickly than he had dreamed of, and that the Chinaman, with his food, had entered from behind, and now stood watching him, with curiosity expressed upon every line of his sallow features.

The swallow was struggling feebly beneath the coat. Norris was intent upon his work. Suddenly he looked up. Some consciousness had come upon him that he was not alone. A band of iron seemed to draw his heart-strings together. The door of the temple behind was half open. He was discovered ; but the man who had discovered him was alone, and as yet had made no sound.

With apparent callousness he undid the leathern thong which he had bitten from the skins upon which he sat, and which he now wore round his waist.

This he made rapidly, and yet quietly, into the form of a noose, as formerly, the Chinaman observing his every act, curious as to what was the meaning of what he saw.



Norris held the cord and forced the man's body from him with all his strength.—p. 85.



Norris stood up ; the stick in his one hand, the noose in the other, as though the two had some connection.

Making so me pretence to bind the thong around the stick, of a sudden he fixed his eyes firmly and abruptly upon some object apparently behind the man who stood near him. The Chinaman obeyed the natural instinct : he half turned in the same direction.

Instantly the noose was around his neck, throttling him with a terrible strength ; whilst the Englishman, with knee and left hand, held the man from him, his right hand, without mercy, expending its desperate force upon the thong.

There was no cry : suspension of breath had been instantaneous. The man moved his hands wildly for a moment or two ; then their motions grew feeble, and his face blackened ; and still Norris held the cord and forced the man's body from him with all his strength.

A wild, exultant hope leapt through him—he was free ! for the Chinaman was killed as surely as he would have been had he dropped some feet with a rope around his neck.

When he knew that the man was dead, Norris lost no time, but dropping the body, hastened to the door and gained the inside of the temple. The door on the other side stood open ; beyond that lay a space, then another temple, through which he must pass ; and what lay beyond that

again Norris could not say, but his heart sank as he perceived on the instant that he was as yet far from free.

Rapidity of action was his only chance. For a moment or two he stood in the temple; then, with an inward prayer, he leaped into the open space and dashed across it to the buildings beyond.

As he did so, he became aware that he was seen. Two of his foes were after him. Fear lent him speed; but the loud cry from his pursuers had gone before him, and as he sped through the second temple, and reached its exit, another foe met him face to face.

With the impetuosity with which he sped, he dashed the man over, so that he fell before him like a reed; but, as he fell, the Chinaman clutched vaguely, and caught the fugitive's ankle in his hand, so that he was precipitated forwards upon his face with terrible force, and instantaneously stunned.



Another foe met him face to face.—p. 86.



CHAPTER V.

[THE TORTURE OF THE MOLTEN LEAD.

THE immediate result of Norris's attempt to escape was that the cold Chinese instincts of his foes turned into those feelings of intensified cruelty which few but the northern Chinese know.

Well was it for Norris that he lay for hours, as one dead, insensible, immovable, and ignorant of that death which, but for his unconsciousness, had assuredly been his. And yet not well; for death indeed would have been preferable to the life in store.

The discovery of the body which lay in the inner court seemed to throw a touch of horror upon everything within the temple, for the man who had committed the deed still lived !

To Norris his captors had been merely Chinamen. Strange as it may seem, he had never in his solitary confinement cast a thought upon their priestly attributes. In his own mind he had called them Chinamen, and nothing more. They had been his foes as a nation, not as a priestly brotherhood ; and

though he had known that these were sanctified, he had not for a moment looked upon them as different in that respect from others of their race, nor in his plans of escape had he taken account of the awful results which might follow the desecration of the temple by the murder of one of its priests.

Had Norris been in possession of his senses, when the body of the priest was found, it is more than a probability that in the impulse of the moment his life, at the hands of those who had recaptured him, might have been taken as atonement for his deed, for the frenzy which spread over one and all within the temple walls cried aloud in its wild thirst for blood and for revenge upon the man who had done this thing. But the momentary impulse had passed, and now a more hideous fate was in reserve. Blood alone cannot atone for blood, life is not repaid by life, when the frenzied souls of Chinese priests behold the corpse of a brother who has been killed, and look upon a temple whose holy light is suddenly obscured.

Death for death!—not so. Life for death!—a long never-ending life, a life whose hell is worse than death—this alone can atone for such a deed.

The injury sustained by Norris, when he fell forward upon his face, was of a most serious nature, and, after many hours of unconsciousness, he recovered slowly to an intermittent state, resembling brain-fever. During this time the priests waited like wild beasts who would play with their *prey before striking it to earth.*

A torture is not a torture if it kill, for then of what use is it? If a man is weak and ill, so that he may go mad, and so that he do not feel to the full the horrors through which he pass, whilst death lies in front of him, it is no use to torture—it is better to wait. For the truest and deepest agony of mind which can be inflicted upon man is that which drives him so far, no farther—near to death, so that he may almost clutch it, and yet removed from it so that he clutch in vain—near to madness—ay, on the very brink of the precipice, and yet saved, as the brain totters, so that it may continue to totter and yet never fall.

Many days passed, and the Chinese still waited; and Norris, who had lain through the ravings of weary hours upon a rough skin or two, which formed his bed, began as by a miracle to recover his strength; and it may be that, as the priests fed him during this time, so they also prayed that he might live, for gradually the crisis passed, and he returned to life to find that he was under constant watch within one of the smaller temple buildings, away from the terrible heat of the mid-day sun.

As he grew stronger, an awful thirst took possession of him—a thirst that seemed unquenchable, and he would seize and drink every drop of water which was brought to him, as soon as it was placed upon the ground.

It was now that the first of that series of tortures to which the man was destined to be subjected

was inflicted upon him. Because he thirsted, it was decreed that he should continue to thirst ; and the water given to him was only the more decreased in quantity, the more he endeavoured to signal to his attendant that water was priceless to him now.

Then at length came the hour when he understood, when there was no more water given to him, and the revelation of the truth threw him back again upon the illness from which he was but commencing to recover.

And thus it came that weeks intervened between Norris's attempt at escape and the day upon which truly commenced that system of fiendish cruelty by which his captors sought to wipe away the blot of desecration and to satisfy the lust for cruelty which is innate in the Chinese.

In the meantime winter was approaching, and Norris in his convalescent state looked forward with a leaden heart to the long months to come, for he seemed to lose hope of freedom with the commencement of the winter. Summer he might never see again.

The closing of the port of Tientsin for the winter months, when ice blocked the river, must mean the temporary closing of the door of hope. Tientsin closed, Norris felt, why he scarcely knew, that his last chance was gone. Had the swallows borne his messages to any purpose ; or had one and all of these been given to the air in vain ?

The birds were all that he could trust to now ;

the ten swallows, liberated with his messages securely bound to them, where were they? If, indeed, one of the ten came into some friendly hand far away, it might be too late, for who would travel from Shanghai to Pekin in the cold winter months? Who would face the perishing cold, and the journey, at such a time?

Norris would wonder for what reason he had been spared—he who had killed a Chinaman; and, again, for what reason was he now allowed to gain strength as he lay chained by his ankle to the ground?

He feared the more when he cast his thoughts upon the apparent clemency of his foes. Why had the want of water now ceased? Why was he again treated as formerly, save only that his ankle was firmly bound? He set himself to the endeavour of fathoming the motives that dictated this gentler treatment.

What interest was it to the Chinese that he should live, unless his money were the object? What had saved him from a cruel death long ere now? He could little guess until he suddenly remembered that the swallow—the eleventh of the birds—had been left beneath his coat on the morning of his attempted escape!

There he now fancied might lie the truth. This man, whoever he was, beyond the temple walls, who had promised him his liberty, and by that means sought to extort a large sum, had been informed

of all that occurred. No doubt the swallow had been taken to him, or the paper at least which had been wrapped to its leg. And this paper bearing the words, "eleventh swallow," would have been sufficient to convey to him the knowledge that there was a chance, however dim, that the English nation beyond the seas might hear of the captivity of William Norris and send to save him from his foes.

If this were so, and if this man still commanded Norris's life to be spared, it seemed probable that he might be doing so partly because he was a great man, and that it would not suit him to be the possible and remote means of a disagreement which might from a little thing swell gradually into a war between the English and Chinese.

For were Norris to be cruelly killed in the Temple of Confucius, there was the possibility that others coming to his rescue might meet with similar treatment, and the first death might grow into a massacre in the after-time.

Such was the conjecture slowly formed by Norris—a conjecture which, wild though it was in many respects, yet had a grain of truth; for, although it was difficult at this time to fathom the full motives which actuated his enemies, it is true that besides that cruelty of which Norris was, till now, unaware, and which had in store for him a life of hideousness, there was another underlying *design*—something which came to the priests from

a higher source, according with their wishes nevertheless in this command.

"Torture, but do not kill!"

Norris fell to pondering upon his captivity one morning, subsequent to his almost complete restoration to health, and feeling as he now did that he was daily regaining his strength, he began once more to cast about in his thoughts for some means by which he might still escape.

This had become a much more difficult question than formerly, for his ankle, as has been said, was now encircled by a chain, which confined his motions to a limited circuit, and at times became the source of extreme irritation and mental pain. In addition to this, he was now never left alone, for a guard was constantly in his presence—not always the same man, it is true, but, none the less, a preventive of the faintest motion, which might create the suspicion of a renewed attempt at freedom. Upon the morning in question his dreams resulted in little save in an ultimate wandering into a land of fancy, in which he lived his youth again beneath the blessed English skies, in the dear old home-land, free to wander where he might please.

His musings were interrupted by the entry of three of the priests, accompanied by a man of filthier garb, whom Norris regarded with some curiosity, wondering whercfore this man had been brought.

The Chinamen approached him, and bound him with ropes. He could make no resistance, or rather, knew that it was useless to do so, and submitted quietly. They had already bound his



The Chinaman approached him, and bound him with ropes.—*p. 96.*

feet, when it flashed across him that now, indeed, he faced the terrors which his fancy had partly painted in a ghastly dream.

For the first moment or two he had yielded,

THE TORTURE OF THE MOLTEN LEAD. 97

thinking that to be further bound could matter little; but now, as he thought upon his helplessness if thus bound, he struggled with all his strength, crying out aloud, whilst the men thrust him down and held him to the ground by the force of numbers against one. Then all his strength, recalled for a moment only, left him, and he lay gasping, and would have been unable to move even without his bonds.

The man whom he had noticed now came forward, knife in hand. Norris shut his eyes, believing that his last hour had come, and waiting for the first touch of the blade.

A few seconds passed, and then he knew the truth—that the man had not come to torture him, but to deprive him of his hair; and, unable to protest, he lay still, whilst, commencing at the forehead and working slowly back, the Chinese barber cut away his hair, bit by bit, shaving each portion of his head closely, whilst the priests stood by watching.

In China there is a custom—an ordeal which has to be borne by those who elect to join certain priesthoods; it is an ordeal of brutal barbarism—an ordeal which makes one shudder even to name. It consists in the pouring of a drop or two of molten lead upon the brow or scalp of the priest.

But one might wonder what connection this had with William Norris, or with the barber who was at work upon his head?

Only this—that the priests of the Temple of Confucius knew of the unspeakable nature of the agony of the molten lead ; and, knowing of no torture more intense than this, they had decided to make the Englishman conform to the priestly rule, and suffer upon his shaven head, during moments of a wanton cruelty which might well waken the dead from their graves, the molten metal to fall and eat into his human flesh.

As yet Norris was totally ignorant of the significance of that to which he was compelled to submit. His first feeling, when he recognised that the shaving of his head was the present object of his captors, was a natural combination of fear and hatred, and then gradually a cold callousness, partaking of the nature of utter despair, came upon him. But, indeed, the sensations which filled him became, as it were, dimmed, and deprived of all acuteness for the time being, owing to an excess of fatigue which had prostrated his energies—an immediate relapse from that full possession of his manhood's strength, which had come to him for a little time whilst he had struggled vainly with those who sought to bind him to the ground.

The Chinese barber is not gifted with singular rapidity in his work ; rather he devotes his attention to the complete removal of every appearance of a hair upon a single spot, and the extreme exactitude with which he proceeds, whilst rendering his work at once minute and complete, gives a singular degree of tediousness to his operations.

THE TORTURE OF THE MOLTEN LEAD. 99

After watching his progress for a considerable time, the three priests retired, leaving the barber to complete his work at his leisure ; and this he continued to do apparently to his own thorough satisfaction for a very protracted period.

At the expiration of that time Norris was perfectly bald, not a hair being left upon his head ; for not even that part where the pigtail is allowed to grow had been left untouched ; nothing but his moustache and his eyebrows and a rough, unkempt growth which had come upon his cheeks during his confinement, remained to testify to the fact that his baldness was not nature's freak.

The barber wound a cloth tightly round his skull, and then left him, still bound, and now recovered so far from his fatigue as to be able to reflect upon what the deprivation of his hair must mean to him, and to be fully conscious of his aching thoughts.

Shortly his captors returned and undid his bonds, and for the rest of the day he was, as he had been for many an hour past, free to move within a little space—free to eat and drink, but kept from anything beyond this by the chain which held his ankle to the ground.

To Norris thought itself had become of that gnawing kind which seems to eat away the soul ; but he took his meals, nevertheless, and at night he slept as he had learned to sleep—a strange half-waking sleep, of constant visions and dreams that bring no rest.

Another day came, and Norris, whose conjectures returned ever to the loss which he had sustained, and who looked upon it as a form of mental torture only, and as imposed with that intent and nothing beyond, was sitting filled with bitterness and thoughts made evil by the cruelty of fate, when the three Chinamen reappeared.

Binding his hands behind his back, and thus rendering him powerless, whilst he offered no resistance, knowing how futile was such waste of strength, they then released the chain about his ankle, and conveyed to him by signs that he must follow them where they led. He did so, wondering inwardly as to what could be the meaning of such proceedings; and thus, with these men, he re-entered, for the first time, the court where he had formerly been confined, and where were now congregated a great number of priests near to a small fire, which had been kindled upon the ground. Upon this fire had been placed an iron vessel, not far from which was an upright post, fixed in the earth deeply and firmly, and around this the Chinamen stood.

To this post Norris was secured, and he recognised, as the bands were drawn tight, that the pot upon the fire contained something of the nature of metal, which was being melted therein. That some awful event was about to occur he realised, and, looking around upon the faces crowding near to him, he tried to read something of his doom,

and his senses seemed to forsake him for a few seconds, whilst the consciousness of the unknown to come descended upon his soul.

The cloth which had bound his head had been removed, and the feeling of cold immediately resulting from the exposure of his hairless skin recalled him to himself, and from that moment every act of those about him was intensified to such a degree that the realism of every detail of what succeeded seemed written in fire upon his brain.

He observed one of the throng stir the molten mixture with a long and thin piece of metal, and then another raised the pot from the fire and approached with it till he stood within a foot from him.

A cry of terrible agony burst from him in a voice surely not his own—

“Great God in heaven, have mercy upon me, God!” and his voice rose to the blue heavens, and the echoing was heard far away!

But the course of the world does not change because of the agony of a single man, and the Chinaman, whose hand was raised so that the heat of the hideous pot smote upon Norris’s face, only spoke two words in answer to the man who stood by his side—the command to proceed with the completion of what was decreed to be done.

In obedience, the other reached out and took the end of that with which the metal had been stirred

—a long spoon—a spoon so small as to contain but a single drop of the molten liquid.

This Norris saw whilst his blood-shot eyes started from their sockets, and then the drop fell upon his head, and the air was filled with an awful noise ; and a second time the spoon fulfilled its function, and again a third, and the world blackened, and hell seemed to stretch out its arms to receive him, and Norris knew no more.

* * * *

For weeks succeeding this the man with the shaven head was little less than mad. They had set him free again in the courtyard, where the dear swallows had used to be. But it was winter now, and the swallows had gone away ; and the man who had called to them to aid him in his sore distress was in a worse state now than then, for the torture had, for the time being, unhinged his mind.

He fed as nature called him to feed, eating as though without knowledge that he did so ; and the rest of the day he spent, sometimes crawling about the court, and sometimes wildly clawing with his nails in a vain attempt to scale the walls, whimpering all the time like no human being, but rather like a poor wounded dog.

Was the debt discharged now ? Was the blot of desecration washed from the temple walls ? There was no one to ask that question ; and, if it had been asked, the answer might have been, "No."

By night he crept into a species of wooden hut or kennel which they had put up for him, and where he had warm furs ; and his clothing, too, was thicker now, for they had dressed him in Chinese garb, heavy and warm, and suited to the chill of the severity of a winter in Pekin.

And it was this severity, this cold, which yet the man did not seem to feel, which proved his salvation. In the midsummer heat body and soul might indeed have borne what had been, but more probably would have succumbed, considering the condition of weakness to which the man was reduced ; as it was, he was saved from fever, and perhaps from worse than fever, by the clear air and invigorating cold.

Thus it was with William Norris in the Temple of Confucius, during the winter of his captivity—a winter in which a scared, furtive look, as of a hunted creature, gradually replaced the expression of pain and the glare, as of madness, upon his face ; whilst a strange crop of new white hair grew in bristles upon his shaven head, to conceal and cover, as though in pity, the spots caused by the molten lead.

CHAPTER VI.

RESCUE NEARING PEKIN.

TIENTSIN, *July 1st*.—I arrived here yesterday, and am now the guest of Mr. Bonsel, a German gentleman, to whom Mr. James Dicey furnished me with a letter of introduction. He is a gentleman with whom, from the first moment of meeting, I felt at home; and having the assurance of my Shanghai friends that I could trust him to the uttermost, it was not long ere he was in full possession of all that I, myself, knew regarding the quest upon which I am bent.

Mr. Bonsel's advice to me is sound and good, and I have decided to follow his suggestion that I should make further inquiries in Tientsin before I proceed to Pekin.

He remembers, he says, having heard something, about eight or nine months ago, of the strange disappearance of an Englishman in Pekin; but this man had no friends in Tientsin, for no one knew even his name, and the story, appearing to have been of Chinese origin, was therefore treated as a *fable* by the little colony.

Mr. Bonsel has accordingly set inquiries on foot to discover, in the first place, with whom this story had origin, and his Chinese boy, who seems a reliable fellow, has instituted a system of search amongst his fellows which I have hopes may be productive of some information within the next few days, though in the meantime my patience is sorely tried. I long to proceed to Pekin, to be on the spot, to be near this man, though I may fail at first to find him; for (if he be still alive) I cannot but conjecture the terrible nature of the prolonged suffering he must have endured in a solitary and apparently endless captivity, and my very presence, as seeking him, must surely, by some hidden means, become known to him and give him hope.

Every step which I take, bringing me nearer to my destination, seems to call to life within me renewed desire for haste, in a way that I cannot explain.

Tientsin is a quiet town; the settlement I am inclined to like, whilst all who live here are upon that footing of friendship which immediately arises among those condemned to a temporary exile in a small and remote town. But it is too dull for me in my present state of disturbed nervous excitement. Were danger before me, I should be cool and calm. It is the looking forward to what may come that is so trying.

I have been to-day in the native city—a city so

vast as to change my opinion entirely of Tientsin. I had fancied it a small place; I found myself indeed mistaken.

It has been only with considerable trouble that I have procured an equipage of any kind. What I have ultimately secured is a dilapidated jinricksha, and from it I have frequently to dismount, owing to the state of the roads, down which, wherever there is a slope, a stream of water appears to be occasionally in the habit of coursing, though all is now as dry as in the desert.

Many of the streets and roads are thus somewhat of the nature of dry rivulet beds filled by the summer dust, and along these progression is by no means of the most pleasant order.

Mr. Bonsel made a further suggestion to me, namely, that in order to lose no time, he should write to a friend of his in Pekin, a Chinaman of, I believe, high rank, who was at one time closely connected in some business or trade with my German friend. His proposal was that he should write asking this man to set on foot an inquiry in Pekin in order that no time should be lost when I reach that city, and so that I should already find matters in train upon my arrival there.

This man, he tells me, is likely to be of the greatest possible assistance to me, and if anything is to be done, it will be, so my host says, through his Chinese friend.

Strange as it may seem, I am unwilling to agree

with him in this. It may be that I feel that I am working, or intend to work, *against* the Chinese race as a whole, regarding one and all as enemy ; or it may be that I simply dislike to trust in a man whom I have not yet seen, and who, be it remembered, belongs to that race for which I have already conceived a deep hatred ; or again that I consider that the matter must in some way be prosecuted by myself, and not by those to whom my instructions may be conveyed.

I have succeeded, not without difficulty, in convincing my host that it is best that all should in the meantime remain in abeyance, and whilst agreeing with him that his friend may, when I reach Pekin and obtain his personal aid, be of the utmost assistance to me, I have informed him that for the present my search must be confined to Tientsin, where I trust with all my heart something may arise from what is being done amongst the Chinese.

If William Norris had a guide, as seems but probable, this guide is surely to be found ; and if he had none, then surely his boatman, or his carters, or some others who accompanied him from Tientsin to Pekin, may now be in Tientsin.

I cannot think that he has been kidnapped, as it were, by the men with whom he set out for the capital ; for if so no word would have been spoken, and as it is there has been a whisper of his disappearance, and this whisper has had origin with some of the Chinese.

And yet, strangely enough, the boy sent by my German host has been engaged for some hours in search, and as yet there is no result. I am too impatient. I should recollect that I may have to remain for days in Tientsin without coming any nearer to the point at issue than I now am.

Tientsin, July 3rd.—The search has resulted in something tangible at length. A trace of William Norris has been found—a trace which, I hope, may lead to something more, now that we have got thus far in the matter.

Mr. Bonsel's boy has succeeded, by some means, in discovering the man who acted as guide to William Norris a year ago ; that is to say, he has discovered his name, for the guide is at present absent from Tientsin ; possibly at Pekin, possibly elsewhere, no one knows. It is believed that he has gone with two gentlemen bound for the Legation in Pekin, but upon this point some doubt has been expressed ; and in any case, even supposing that I was assured that such was the case, it would only be seeking, as it were, for the needle amongst the hay to follow him in the vague hope of finding him at present.

To a certainty, were I to do so, we should pass each other on the way ; for, as I understand, there are many ways of transit between the capital and its port, and it is not very likely that he and I should meet upon the road.

Thus whilst I reached Pekin he might have

returned to Tientsin ; and as it has now become a matter of the utmost importance that I should wait to see this guide, I am now tied down to remain in Tientsin for, so far as I can see, an unlimited period of time.

It appears that the discovery of the guide's name was, in the end, simplicity itself. The guide having made inquiries throughout Tientsin regarding his master subsequent to the disappearance, it was thus clearly recollected by certain of his friends that he had done so, and therefore, so soon as those now inquiring upon the matter came upon these friends, it was at once and easily established as a fact, that the man for whose return to Tientsin I now wait was the guide of William Norris.

By what means master and guide became separated a year ago I cannot as yet tell. Mr. Bonsel has suggested several ways in which it was possible for him to have missed his guide, and all are more or less probable ; but the truth we can ascertain only when the guide himself returns, and how far this guide will be useful to me is questionable.

Will the irritation of the delay he now causes me by his absence be recompensed by the information he has to give me ? It is, I fear, extremely doubtful, for the man has himself long ago given up the search, and the story he has to tell must bear but indirectly upon the imprisonment of William Norris.

I have written to acquaint my Shanghai friends of this annoying delay, which I yet feel it a necessity to bear, and I have asked them to write me, on the chance of the letter still reaching me before I leave here, to inform me whether either of them is acquainted with my host's Chinese friend in Pekin, called Shan-min-yuen, and, if so, to what extent I may rely upon him, taking into account the fact that I shall naturally be somewhat reticent with a Chinaman.

I think it extremely probable that, although neither of the Diceys may have met this man, they may at some time have heard of him; and as my host must in a sense be prejudiced regarding his friend, I should like an outside opinion, however vague, upon the man whose guest I now understand I am likely to become when I arrive in Pekin. If I become his guest, and if, as I understand, he is well acquainted with the English language, it will be an extremely awkward and difficult matter indeed, to keep my own counsel as to the true reason of my journey; and I should prefer, unless I can learn that this Chinaman differs greatly from such of his race as I have so far observed—and this is, indeed, a very narrow circle—to abstain from acceptance of either his aid or hospitality.

So far I have seen nothing of the higher classes of the Chinese, so that I may err in being so prejudiced against them as a nation; but, not-

RESCUE NEARING PEKIN. III

withstanding what I may say to myself on this score, it must, I fear, remain an impossibility to me to conquer my natural dislike for the race.

Bonsel has quite settled the matter in his own mind. What is to be done without Chinese aid? Go to the Legation? Of what use in a city like Pekin? Well, perhaps he is right. Possibly it may require the authority of a Chinese dignitary to unlock the gates of William Norris's prison.

If it be so, I should prefer in such case, to use this man as my tool, he obeying my directions, not I his; and if I am his guest, I scarcely see that the rights of hospitality would admit of my thus treating him, even granting the possibility that my intellect may be sharp enough to battle with his.

True the whole circumstances are exceptional; but there is much to be considered at every move from this time forth.

Tientsin, July 5th.—I was somewhat surprised to receive a letter to-day from Frederick Dicey; and as this letter seems to me likely, in no inconsiderable degree, to influence my future actions, I have decided to copy it into my diary intact as follows:—

MY DEAR SIR,

Since you left Shanghai, my brother and I have frequently thought of you, and your object in travelling to the North. You would be almost amused if you knew how we have talked over the matter (our interest is so great

in your doings) until it is almost threadbare. But I am not writing to you now to tell you of this alone, but to put before you something which I think it possible may alter your plans in some degree; and as my brother James is of the same opinion as myself, I shall write you very fully upon the subject.

The second day from that on which you left Shanghai, I happened to pass along the Bund at mid-day, and to my surprise found that to all seeming, half the native population of Shanghai had congregated in one place, lining the frontage to the river, and here and there impeding the traffic upon the Bund. I could not make it out. The only conclusion, explaining the crowd, which I could come to, was that some very high personage in the Government was about to arrive.

Of course, as you know, a Chinese crowd is like every other crowd, it simply grows upon itself; and I have little doubt that, in the present case, only one-tenth of the crowd knew the why and wherefore of the excitement.

A number of my friends, whom I shortly met, appeared as ignorant of the cause of the disturbance as I was, but somewhat fortunately, perhaps, I came across Jenkin's boy, and got something out of him as to what it all meant. I am afraid I tire you by a very long rigmarole, but you must excuse my doing so. I am coming to the point very soon, and think it better to err on the side of fulness, rather than the opposite.

It seems that they were expecting the arrival of a steamship from Hong Kong, bearing, amongst other passengers, a man who has, so I was informed, just been released from exile; and the event is so extraordinary a one (that this man should have been pardoned), that the news has spread in some way, and this was the reason of the crowd.

Jenkin's boy could give me only a poor idea of the

matter; but I investigated further at a later hour, and was myself impelled by curiosity to join the crowd, when I succeeded in catching a glimpse of this extraordinary man. I call him extraordinary, not only from the fact that I was somewhat impressed by his appearance, but also that, from what I have gathered, his case is, indeed, a singular one, and almost beyond credence.

To look at him one would at once judge him to be Chinese; but (and this is where the curious part comes in) he is not a Chinaman, but of English birth, and merely a naturalised Chinese.

I know, indeed, but little of his story. He came to China as a boy, was adopted in some strange way by a Chinaman in Canton, and from that sought to rise in his adopted land, till at length the Government of Pekin discovered his origin and banished him to the island of Formosa; from this exile he has now been released; and, after a short stay in Hong Kong, has come on hither.

I do not know what his intentions now are, but imagine that he must be upon his way to the Northern Court, in all probability to report himself and have his freedom ratified. Whether this comes anywhere near the truth or not, however, I cannot say. I hasten to write to you at once, in order to catch the steamer, which will take my letter in a few hours' time from now, to ask you if you have any objection to my seeing this man, with a view to inquiring if he will endeavour to assist you as far as lies in his power when he reaches Pekin (if he ultimately intends going to the capital), for I feel confident that if there is one man in the whole world who can be of use to you it is this man, whom, from mere seeing, I have taken a liking to, and whom the Chinese call by the name, Chin-chin-wa.

He is a tall man, dressed in the clothing of his adopted land; and what was strangest to me, he bore himself like

a king amongst the crowd that crushed round when he landed, as though seemingly conscious that his English blood gave him a higher right than was that of his adopted fellows; and this after, I believe, some seventeen years of solitude in Formosa, which do not seem in any way to have impaired his knowledge as to how to treat his fellows.

Very seldom have I seen a crowd so excited. The arrival of this extraordinary man, and, as it were, the glory of his bearing seemed to influence one and all. I myself caught the fever, and a feeling came over me that if ever I looked upon a man who was a king by nature's right I looked upon him now.

Will you leave the matter in my hands to do as I judge best? I have consulted James upon the subject; and, had it not been for your express desire that we should do nothing until hearing from you, I should have already approached this Anglo-Chinee. I should like to sound him to ascertain if he can and will really be of any use to you; we can trust him, I am certain. If you doubt this, remember that he has suffered penal servitude at the hands of his countrymen, and consider whether it is not more than likely that the old English blood rose to the top during those years. Though he is a Chinaman still to all appearance, we cannot see his heart.

In what capacity I shall put the matter before him, as I propose to do with your permission, I am very doubtful. If he did in the end prove useful could you offer a reward? I do not know but that he may be a poor man, unless the Government have taken him up.

Now, if, as you half-conjectured, Norris is confined in the palace grounds in Pekin, this seems to me the truest and indeed the only means to ascertain the truth. Let me, as your ambassador, approach this man, Chin-chin-wa, and you may rely I shall do my utmost to induce him to agree

with my views; and if he does do so—well, I feel that you will have a powerful ally.

Believe me to be, yours faithfully,

FREDERICK DICEY.

I trust this may still be in time to catch you at Tientsin.

To

Herbert Vanscombe, Esq.,

c/o L. Bonsel, Esq.,

Tientsin.

Per S.S. "VICTORIA."

My first feeling upon concluding the perusal of this letter was that Frederick Dicey had taken the affair too much to heart, and, whilst pondering continuously upon my object in coming to China, he had, very naturally, so I thought, become inflamed with the desire to assist me as far as possible ; and hence, upon the arrival of this Chinaman in Shanghai, he had, by some mental process, connected this man's life with my own ; and, therefore, written me as he had done.

However I thought over the matter closely. It was evident from the concluding paragraph of the letter before me, where he said, "This seems to me the truest and indeed the only means to ascertain the truth," that neither of the brothers could know that my host was at all likely to introduce me to any Chinese friend in Pekin. Therefore, in all probability, they could give me little or no information about him ; and so my letter, crossing that which I had now received, was practically of no use.

To go to Shan-min-yuen, as Bonsel urges me to do, becomes the more distasteful to me the more I think upon the subject; so in the end I come gradually to think that possibly this strange man, this exile, who is an Englishman born, so it seems, may be of use to me.

I have accordingly written to Frederick Dicey that he should, as he proposes, see this man; and if, from a personal interview, he judges that Chin-chin-wa may be of service, then I leave the matter in his hands to do as he may think best.

At the same time I cannot but feel that the man he talks of may not be by any means of a philanthropical character, nor on the other hand may remuneration from me have any influence upon him, if he is maintained by Government support, as this letter which I have received suggests.

It virtually comes to be a question in my own mind as to whether I should trust Bonsel's friend, of whom he so highly speaks, or choose rather to abide by my Shanghai friends for that advice and assistance which I, as an Englishman, must, as I foresee, sooner or later require, when in Pekin.

I have taken my stand by Dicey's man, if the fates so will it. He is an Englishman—not a Chinaman to the core—perhaps that has chiefly influenced me. We shall see, in the long run, whether I have been right or wrong. I feel as though I had made the testing throw to-day—for I have come to that point when my every

[REDACTED]

RESCUE NEARING PEKIN. 117

act must lead towards the decision which I earnestly hope may end in life, not death, for William Norris.

The Diceys strike me as careful men. I feel that their action can scarcely prejudice or endanger my success.

CHAPTER VII.

THE EXILE CHIN-CHIN-WA.

TIENTSIN, *July 10th*.—Which of the two will be the first to arrive—the Chinese guide, for whose return I wait in Tientsin, or this man Chin-chin-wa? Everything seems to conspire to hinder my progress. I am, in reality, no nearer my goal than I was a month ago, so far as I can see. I have arrived at a state of mind bordering upon despair. Absurd as it may seem, I have come to place my hopes in the exile's acceptance of the terms which Dicey is, by my wish, to put before him.

In a word, I have arrived at such a stage of low-spiritedness, owing to the delays thrust upon me, that I seem to look to the arrival of Chin-chin-wa in Tientsin as the only light which breaks the darkness of my thoughts. Meantime I can do nothing; yet I regret that I did not write more strongly to Shanghai, that I did not take the matter more seriously, that I did not urge upon *my friends* that only immediate action could *satisfy me*.

It is curious that but five days ago I looked upon the news I had received from Shanghai as unimportant, and now I feel as though I had perhaps cast aside what might have been a chance.

Certainly I wrote to Dicey; but I might have done more—I might also have written to Chin-chin-wa; and as it now stands, I feel it would be absurd to do so, for the question as to whether he will or will not join me or assist me will have been decided before further letters could now reach Shanghai.

Frederick Diccy is not the sort of man to have written me thus strongly on the subject had he not been prompted to do so by some very deep feeling.

But why should not I move on to Pekin?

I struggle against the double reason which now keeps me here, for my impatience would hurry me on, notwithstanding that I know it is right for me to stay.

Nothing of interest happens. I dine out, or dine quietly with my host. I spend my days routing through the native city, and then I return, vainly hoping that this guide may have come during my short absences from my temporary home.

Tientsin, July 16th.—My patience has been rewarded, and yet not rewarded.

I am thoroughly sick of Tientsin. The very quietness and monotony of the place cling around me, and at last I am to break away from it. I am writing these lines preparatory to packing the

volume I call my diary. A singularly scrappy affair it has always been.

The less there is to do and see in a town, the more time I should find to record my few doings; but it is one thing to ponder upon writing up a few days of one's diary, and another to do so. This afternoon I have resolutely determined to relate what has occurred, for something has actually happened at last.

The guide who accompanied Norris to Pekin has returned; and this return serves one object chiefly, that I am now free to proceed, knowing that nothing further is to be gained by staying here. There is, indeed, the hope of a reply from the Diceys, but I have quite made up my mind that I must face what now seems to me to be inevitable—the refusal of the ex-exile to mix himself up in the affair. The man who has been an exile once will hardly risk becoming so a second time!

Neither do I yet know how far he has the pardon of the Government, even supposing he were willing to assist me. No! he cannot be free to such an extent that he would be able to act for me quite independently of other considerations, so I am, perhaps better without him after all.

And yet I would give much—very much—to have this man as a really free man working with me, and assisting me with his advice, as Frederick Dicey puts it—“*as my ally.*”

I fancied I should have heard from Shanghai ere

now, but as yet there is no reply, so I am determined to go on to Pekin at dawn ; and, as there is no help for it, I shall go to Bonsel's friend, Shan-min-yuen, when I reach that city.

When I recognise my powerlessness and utter ignorance of the ways and customs of the Chinese, I come to see that the search which I undertook is a very much more responsible matter than I had any idea of when the swallow came to me months ago in Brussels.

The guide, in the first place, has proved almost useless to me. This is his story as nearly as I can relate it. Bonsel was present at our conference to translate to me such pigeon English as I could not quite make out.

Norris came, according to the guide's report, to Tientsin about a year ago, so far as the man remembers. Where did he stay? was my first inquiry ; for I have already spent some useless hours trying to recall to the people at the Globe Hotel the recollection of the visit which I had fancied must have been a necessity.

The guide has partly cleared up matters.

Norris remained upon the steamer upon which he arrived. As far as I can gather, he arrived in Tientsin at nightfall, stayed on board the steamer all night, and left in carts at daybreak with this guide, who had been procured for him by the Chinese steward of the ship. The guide tired us with lengthy and wearisome details of a trip which

Norris made to the Great Wall. But the sum and substance of what we extracted from him lies in this—that, on leaving Pekin to return to Tientsin, the guide went ahead, preceding Norris for some reason, leaving his master in Pekin, and that he never heard of his master nor could discover any trace of him or his carter since that time.

As, however, this guide states that he would recognise the carter in an instant, were he to see him, I have arranged to take him with me to Pekin, in addition to the fellow I brought with me from Shanghai. The party increases as we go along. My great hope—though it is, after all a very slender one—is that the carter may be discoverable.

I have found the guide; why should I not go a step further and find the carter?

And if I find the carter, surely that will mean that I shall find his late master.

How far the guide has been to blame in the losing of his master I cannot determine. There seems to have been a strange tissue of misfortunes cast around Norris, for the guide states that every thread was broken by which he might have traced the missing man. He may be right, but to me there is one thread still left. I may find the carter.

The guide was of impression that, as the carter disappeared, and as he has never come across him since, both men had been made away with; but my views rather tend to this—that both may indeed

have been seized at the first, but the carter, in all probability, liberated after some weeks or months ; for though it might be advisable and advantageous to keep the Englishman in captivity, it is scarcely likely that the carter (one of the lowest types of the Chinese race) would be in any way useful as a prisoner. So it seems to me extremely likely either that the man has been liberated by the captors, who still keep his master in confinement, or that he has been killed ; but as the carter would not be the sort of creature to convey information unasked, I conjecture that there is the probability that he may be still in the land of the living somewhere in the interior of China.

Whilst my conjectures are but wild upon this and other matters relative to my search, I think that I am in the right in endeavouring to trace this carter, who (even if I find him), may still, alas ! prove to have forgotten all that has occurred.

I cannot account for the man's disappearance *in toto* except in the way I have mentioned—imprisonment for a season, and then liberated or killed : which was it, I wonder ! The former, I trust.

I foresee a very lengthy search and a prolonged stay in the city of Pekin.

My guide is to have all in readiness for a start at daybreak. I travel in a mule-litter.

Tientsin, July 16th-17th (midnight).—It is many hours since I ceased my writing, somewhat abruptly, *it is true.*

I penned the last lines of the above in the afternoon, and I am now continuing at midnight, in order to record the event which broke in upon my diary, and those which succeeded thereafter; for it seems to me that I may henceforth have considerable difficulty in keeping this record, so that I am anxious to write it up as far as possible before I leave Tientsin, in order that I may truthfully give my first impressions upon meeting with the man whom the Chinese call Chin-chin-wa.

I was busy writing this afternoon when my guide entered the room with, to my delight, a parcel of letters from Shanghai: one from my banker there, another from James Dicey, and a third from Frederick Dicey.

It is only necessary to give an extract concluding the last of the three, to this effect:—

"To come to the point, Chin-chin-wa agrees to join you. Whether it was, or was not, his intention to proceed to Pekin I did not inquire. It was quite enough for me when he conformed with my views. I spoke of reward, and wish indeed that I had not mentioned this. The man appears to be extremely proud. If he is of service to you, I fancy the only thing in this way which he will admit of, even if he goes so far, will be to allow you to pay his expenses; but at the first mention of such a thing he gave me a look which spoke volumes. He did not speak, but frankly I felt indescribably small. It is as well to mention this to you, that you may know the point is a delicate one, and difficult of approach.

"I am glad, indeed, to have secured this man's services

(perhaps services is scarcely the word), for I feel sure you will be the better for his assistance. I did not dally with the matter in hand. I told Chin-chin-wa clearly the full facts of the case. He agreed with me that it might be possible that Norris is confined in Imperial grounds; the possible reasons for this he would not hazard to guess, and, indeed, expressed himself unwilling to give any opinion whatever until he saw you. He is much interested in the matter, and, to my thinking, grasps, as it were, at an opportunity of acting against the Chinese in the cause of justice. I don't fancy you will now find him—whatever he may have been—much of a Chinaman at heart—after his seventeen years of captivity.

"This letter will very likely be in your hands after you have welcomed Chin-chin-wa, for he is setting out immediately to join you; and, if you have gone on to Pekin, he will follow you, in which case you will also receive this letter by a special messenger.

"I am writing Bonsel to this effect, that he may despatch a courier at once to Pekin, so that you may be advised of Chin-chin-wa's arrival, for I believe it possible that he may set out in the same steamer as that which bears this letter.

"You ask us about Bonsel's Chinese friend. I delayed writing to you till now, chiefly for want of a steamer, and partly because I hoped to be able to write you in reply to yours, which I expected, regarding Chin-chin-wa. I have heard of this man, but never even knew his name; he occupies a good post in the Government, and I think very likely might be of great use to you, but, indeed, I know so little what to say that I can only suggest that you be guided by Bonsel and Chin-chin-wa as to whether you visit him or not. Personally my feelings are rather against than for the doing so, and I will tell you why. I asked Chin-chin-wa if he knew the name. He at once said, 'Yes; ' but when I told him that it was your idea to go to him for assistance when you reach Pekin, I fancy he was annoyed.

"All he remarked was, 'It is well not to trust too much to the Chinese! Are you not aware that you did a very risky thing in coming to me? Suppose I had gone to Pekin and spread abroad the information that an Englishman was seeking another who had been made a captive, and who was still alive somewhere in the city. I think you will agree the chances of success would be lessened.' And in a great degree he is right; for if this friend of Bonsel's set about inquiring injudiciously, or is not utterly silent on the subject, the very persons who may be interested in the captivity may be apprised of the search you are making, and, once apprised—well, it is not difficult to imagine the rest. But, as I have said, the man may very likely be the very person to go to. You have Bonsel to advise you on the one side, and Chin-chin-wa on the other, and I am sure that you will make a very much more judicious decision in the matter than I ever could.

"Chin-chin-wa's experiences I leave to his personal narration, as, however interesting, they are too long for a letter; besides which, his story may serve to pass away the weary hours of the journey between Tientsin and Pekin, if, as I hope, you are still awaiting my reply to your last.

"Believe in our very deep interest in your expedition, and our heartfelt wishes for its ultimate success."

I had scarcely finished this letter when a knock upon my door sent the wild hope through me that my future comrade had actually arrived.

I was seated behind my table, facing the door. My guide stood upon the threshold; but I did not attend to his words, for there was another behind him whom I knew instantly to be the man, Chin-chin-wa. I do not think I have ever felt my heart



The meeting with Chin-chin-wa.—p. 129.



beat so wildly at meeting any of my fellows as it did now. I am not a nervous man by any means, but I confess that the arrival of the mail after so prolonged a quietness, as had been my lot for days past, had somewhat excited me, and the immediate arrival of this strange man added to the disturbed impressions which filled me.

I rose instantly to welcome him, and approached him with outstretched hand, with the single word, as I did so—

“Chin-chin-wa ? ”

He bowed in answer, and took my hand in a clasp, the firm warmth of which came as a surprise to me ; for I did not immediately remember that he had been an exile for seventeen years, and that before then he had been a Chinaman, so that he had forgotten the flimsy way in which we Englishmen give, on a first acquaintance, palm to palm.

But it struck me that the grasp meant truth and firmness, and I can see now it must the more have done so, in that no emotion of the heart was concealed in the hand-clasp of the man who had not given hand to a fellow-man for many, many years.

CHAPTER VIII.

SEEKING A CLUE.

I AM myself moderately tall; but Chin-chin-wa, still in the prime of his life, appeared to tower above me, and his breadth indicated a great strength which I have never seen so clearly stamped upon the figure.

His face seemed to speak the same, but to speak also of a strength that was as great intellectually as it was bodily.

One could have told instinctively that his past had been a strange one, and that he alone, by reason of his mental and bodily power, could have lived through it, without having to succumb. I could understand how Dicey had been carried away by the enthusiasm of the Chinese crowd. I am no hero-worshipper, nor have I ever been so; but I could feel that, if one desired to look upon a hero, he had but to look upon Chin-chin-wa; and it is none the less strange that I should have felt this when it is remembered that, to all appearance, *the man* is a Chinaman.

He wears the Chinese dress—somewhat richer in its silks than any I have seen heretofore—and his head is bare like a Chinaman's, except for the pigtail which, interwoven with coloured silk, almost trails upon the ground. But there is still a dim something upon his face which, to an Englishman, would give a suspicion of his nationality, and it must not be forgotten that I looked upon him as upon an Englishman from the first moment when we met.

Time has, in a sense, almost perfected the change of race to the outward eye; his brown features might well deceive one; and, in a word, he strikes me as being as like a Northern Chinese as any of the race.

But there is one noticeable thing, which proves that his Chinese adoption has been some southern one, namely, his walk; for he walks on the ball of his foot, more or less, not leaning backwards so much as the northerners do, and treading less heavily upon the heel.

I drew a seat forward for my guest, and expressed to him as briefly, yet as cordially as possible, my thanks for his haste in joining me.

He waited until I had concluded, which I did speedily, being curious to hear his voice. Then he answered me in a tone such as I could have imagined to have grown habitual to a man confined in solitude for a prolonged period.

His English, marvellous as it may seem, was

perfect—as perfect as I believe his Chinese to be—his voice low, and yet clear-sounding and firm, a contrast in one way to the man who spoke, and yet seeming to be the only voice which could have belonged to such a one as he.

"Do not thank me, Mr. Vanscombe, for as yet nothing has been done. You may find my power but small." There was a touch of bitterness in the words. "I am not what by right I should have been."

I did not answer, and he continued in a few moments :

"Mr. Dicey has given me certain particulars of your search. I shall accompany you."

"Pardon me," I said, perhaps somewhat moved by curiosity, "have you calculated what you risk? It would be wrong indeed for me to ask you to join me in the search for a man whose life may be already taken, if this search in any way endangers your future. I came to China to do this thing alone. Whether I shall ever succeed or not I cannot tell. But I do not know in what position you stand to the Government, and I must point out to you at the outset that my actions may, for all I know, go directly counter to the interests or laws of the Chinese powers; for it is best that you should know exactly that I have come to look upon this search as a sacred thing, and as a mission which I have to fulfil; and I am prepared to forfeit my life in the attempt!"

"Proceed," said Chin-chin-wa.

"Have not I put the matter plainly? I understand you have been an exile for many years. I am willing to face death; do not you hesitate to face a thing worse than death—the renewal of your exile?"

"Hesitate?" was the answer, with a touch of scorn. "You forget," he added proudly, "I am Chin-chin-wa!"

Within an hour I had placed before him all that has occurred till now. We sent for Norris's guide at the expiration of that time. A lengthy examination ensued, Chin-chin-wa speaking in what has long ago become familiar to him as his native tongue; and although little further has been gained by the examination, it has given me the feeling that I reach in all cases very much nearer to the exact truth through the medium of my ally, Chin-chin-wa, who is able to speak the language of the Chinese.

To Chin-chin-wa, upon showing him the fragment of the swallow's message, the same thought as had previously occurred in the first place to myself and then to Dicey suggested itself, namely, that the writer, William Norris, spoke of more than himself as being imprisoned, since he used the word "us."

I put before him at some length the reasons which led to my thinking otherwise; but he disagreed with me, for, as he says with regard to the point that I make, of the absence of the

room for the inclusion of the letter "s" at the end of the word "prisoners," the writer cannot be looked upon as able to exercise extreme care; the last letters of the words may have been crushed. This it is reasonable to suppose. Again, the word "in" would correctly fill up the space left after the word "us;" and Chin-chin-wa concludes, from the fact of the disappearance of the carter, that this word "us" refers to William Norris and his carter. Ultimately he fell back upon my idea that it is in the Imperial grounds they may be confined; and this is the way we have filled up the blanks.

"In God's name rescue us;
Lose no time, we are prisoners
In the Palace. Seek for us in
Pekin. By the Chinese. Tenth Swallow.
William Norris, September, 18—
May God help us!"

And although I am convinced that we have not quite got at the correct solution, I fear that we shall never come much nearer it, and that perhaps Chin-chin-wa's arguments are in the right direction. To him it is evident that, from the abrupt way in which the words "Tenth Swallow" precede the man's name, where they are evidently misplaced, the whole has been written hurriedly; so that the apparent disconnection of ideas evident in our reading—"In the Palace. Seek for us in Pekin. By the Chinese,"—is not by any means unnatural.

Again, " Palace " is such a word as the Englishman would probably use as indicating the Imperial City ; and without being able to give us any further definite information as to the place where he is confined, he instructs to " seek in Pekin."

This might either arise from ignorance upon his part as to the name of the place of his confinement, or from the expectation that he might be shifted from one place to the other, and therefore hesitated to name a definite spot.

The reasons for such an imprisonment Chin-chin-wa will not guess ; for, as he says, there are so many conjectures we might make, and each with a semblance of truth, that it is useless to waste our time upon matters such as these.

And he is right. That Norris is a prisoner is the main point. Beyond that, we have to discover where he is confined, and thereafter other questions must be decided which we need not yet raise.

I am truly grateful for the chance which led my path to cross that of Chin-chin-wa. He is a man who strikes me as bound to succeed in what he undertakes. And this first undertaking upon his release is indeed a noble one, when it is remembered that he risks a renewal of that exile from which he is but just set free, an exile which he does not hesitate to face a second time in casting in his lot with me.

Bonsel broke in upon our colloquy shortly before the dinner hour. Chin-chin-wa left us at a little

after ten p.m., by which time I think we had pretty well thrashed out all that we have as yet to consider.

By Chin-chin-wa's desire, I have changed my plans. We lose little or nothing by so doing, for we go now upon horseback; and early in the evening we sent a relay of ponies ahead of us, which we shall use to-morrow night. We leave at sundown to-morrow, to avoid the heat of the day, and thus Chin-chin-wa has sufficient time given him to prosecute the inquiries he still deems advisable in Tientsin.

I put before him my desire to search for the carter. He considers it of little use; but if he be in Tientsin at present, he will be discovered to-morrow, so he leads me to hope.

I have yet had neither time nor opportunity to learn the history of this strange and striking man —a history which it seems he has himself written in the English tongue during his exile. This I gleaned in a short conversation which ensued upon my touching, with extreme delicacy, upon monetary matters during the afternoon. Upon my doing so, Chin-chin-wa interrupted me at once.

"Mr. Dicey," he said, "spoke somewhat strangely of a reward. I am not a man who requires the money of the English. I am rich, and I am proud. My wealth, if you knew it, must be even greater than yours, and it is Chinese wealth inherited from the man who first befriended me amongst the

Chinese many years ago. Yung Lao died two years ago. His wealth came to me, though I was then an exile, and one who never hoped to taste of freedom. You have read of my life, have you not? You have read in England what my life has been; is it not so?" he asked.

"Read your life? Known of your exile? You were in China; we do not hear of all Chinese doings in England."

He looked at me in astonishment.

"I wrote to England," he said; "I wrote and told of my early life, six years ago."

"To whom did you write?"

"Fancying I was about to die," he replied, "I wrote my tale and sent it to England. I longed that my old people should hear of me before I died. I was an exile for life, and I faced the exile's death. I wrote home what my life had been. I thought that you would know. I sent it to the school where I once was, as a boy; someone, surely, would receive it. Or can it have been lost?"

"To my knowledge," I answered, "it has never reached England; perhaps it was lost upon the way; or perhaps it may have been sent to some publisher's," I added musingly, for my thoughts were elsewhere.

"But they would have used it, would they not?"

The curious want of knowledge of our English doings struck me as strange; but I recollect in a

moment that Chin-chin-wa knew little of the country of his birth.

"I do not know," was my reply. "Some publishers put away work, I have heard, for months or years even, and then may never read it in the end. They might not publish it. There are many ways in which your life-tale may have been lost; you must tell it to me in person, if you will, on our road to Pekin."

He has promised to do so; and I have told him that, on my return to England, if, indeed, I pass through the dangers which I expect ere long to face me, I shall ascertain the truth about the story of his life.

Tientsin, July 17th.—This morning I had a long conversation with Bonsel regarding Chin-chin-wa. He is impressed by him, but, at the same time, has taken a dislike to him I fancy, because he expressed his opinion so strongly and firmly to us both last night, that it may prejudice our chance of success if we go to Pekin as the guests of Shan-min-yuen.

"I know him by name only, Mr. Bonsel," Chin-chin-wa had said, "and you must therefore kindly look upon anything I may say as quite unbiassed. I have heard he is a friend of yours; therefore we ought perhaps to go to him. But you must excuse me if I think otherwise."

"What reasons?" inquired my host coldly. "I understand you are putting no slight on my Chinese friend?"

"None!" was the frank reply. "It is possible that your friend might assist us; all that I say is that in the first place we must not go to him. We shall feel our way, so I propose; and if we find it judicious to go to him for his advice and assistance, the introduction you so kindly give to Mr. Vanscombe will be of undoubted service. For myself," he added, in a moment or two, "I require no introduction; your friend already knows of me!"

"But you are giving no reason."

"Perhaps," was Chin-chin-wa's reply, "there is none, only that I think it above all things wise to keep our own counsel in the matter till we see that something is to be gained by doing otherwise. To my mind, it would be rash to put this affair before anyone in Pekin before we ascertain that it is advantageous to do so. I counsel Mr. Vanscombe not to go to your friend until then, in the same way as I counsel him not to go to the Legations in Pekin; because the more closely we keep our secret, the less is it likely to leak out that an Englishman is in Pekin seeking for a friend. Are you prepared," he continued, turning to me, "to assume the Chinese dress whenever it may be necessary? Include a pigtail, but not the shaving of your head," he added, with something of a smile.

"I am ready at any moment," I answered.

"You have been in Pekin, Mr. Bonsel?" he went on.

"Yes," replied my host, "I know Pekin well. You also have been there, is it not so?"

"I was exiled from Pekin." He paused a moment and then resumed. "You have told me that you know the city; but you do not know the Chinese side of it; and it is the Chinese with whom we have to do. I have a certain degree of power in China, if I require to use it; but, from our conjectures, we are inclined to decide that the power more likely to be required will be against and not for the race, or, shall I say, against the higher powers of the land? In these circumstances, I think my actions must strike you as likely to be more uncontrolled than can be those of your friend, however powerfully interested he may be in the case. What do you say, Mr. Vanscombe—am I right or wrong?"

"You are right," was my answer. "I shall take Mr. Bonsel's introduction with the utmost gratitude, but I shall not promise to use it."

"Well, you know the best," said my host, with just a shade of annoyance in his tone. "May I be pardoned for asking," he concluded, turning to Chin-chin-wa, "how you decided to come here; why you are joining my guest?"

Chin-chin-wa slightly shrugged his shoulders.

"Because I think I can assist—because Mr. Dicey was certain that I could; and, perhaps, because the old nature that has been kept inactive all these years is still boiling within

me, and calling for some work that is difficult to do, as it used to do in the old time when I was a young man."

It was in reference to this part of our conversation that Bonsel spoke to me this morning. There are several things which puzzle him. His nature is of that ultra-suspicious kind we sometimes meet with. Firstly, he wished to know the history of Chin-chin-wa, and how he came to be exiled. I told him that I had not yet learned his past; and he expressed surprise that I should trust myself to the power of a stranger, in allowing him to guide me.

Bonsel wearies me with his objections and unintentional casting of difficulties in my way.

I have now told him plainly that I shall not go to Shan-min-yuen until I find it advisable to do so, and I have extracted from him the promise that he will not write to Pekin advising my arrival, or in any way referring to me or my search, until I give him permission to do so. What a difference there is in men! Here is this man who, in his desire to assist, seems to throw obstacles in the way. Somewhat different to my thinking from that quieter and deeper treatment of the matter which I have received at the hands of the Diceys. And yet, at first meeting, Bonsel's advice seemed all that could be desired. One's opinions change gradually, possibly mine have done so because of his endeavour to thrust his Chinese friend down

my thro t, so to speak, to the prejudice of Chin-chin-wa. My decision was made some time ago.

I tri to Chin-chin-wa !

CHAPTER IX.

A RACE FOR LIFE.

IT is such a very long time since I wrote a line in my diary, that I am ashamed to mention the date of the day upon which I am now writing. And before proceeding to write up to date, it is well that I should first give some account of the man who set out with me from Tientsin to Pekin, to assist in the search for William Norris, and that I should note briefly the outline of the life which has been his.

As had been promised, he gave me a detailed account of his past when we were upon the road ; and that account I shall now repeat in shorter form, and yet as clearly as I may be able.

He came to Hong Kong as a boy, leaving no friends in England ; and in Hong Kong he was destined to make but few.

Possessing a peculiar aptitude for acquiring languages, he set himself to study Chinese with such success that he speedily understood the language clearly, and detected one of the Chinamen, with whom the firm had dealings, in some

fraud, regarding which he overheard a conversation not intended for English ears.

From this fact, and his subsequent act of keeping the Chinaman's counsel and secret, as he judged it best to do, he gained a Chinese friend, who, when trouble came to the boy, and when he left the firm in which he was employed, stood by him, making the singular proposal that the English lad should cast in his lot with the Chinese.

This he finally agreed to do, and, with his Chinese friend Yung Lao, proceeded to Canton, where he lived for many years buried in study, and there it was that he received the name of the Welcome One—Chin-chin-wa.

The boy now conceived the idea of entering for the State examinations, and perhaps a little of the great mental power of Chin-chin-wa may be traced to the fact that he did ultimately enter the examination-halls of Canton, and, after passing through the hardship of a Chinese examination, he, an Englishman, was announced as the most successful student of the time in Southern China.

Before this, however, he had made a Chinese enemy, whose name I think I recollect correctly to be Fa-to-man. This rival took the second place in the examination.

But for Chin-chin-wa he would have taken the first.

Leaving Canton, Chin-chin-wa came to Pekin to undergo a still higher examination for State honours.

Fa-to-man followed in his footsteps, and a few days before the examination, whilst Chin-chin-wa was walking one evening in Pekin, his rival sprang upon him.

Fortunately some instinct caused the intended victim to turn in time.

For the rest, any one who has conceived a correct idea of the man, Chin-chin-wa, will easily guess that it was not many seconds ere his foe lay at his mercy.

Then it was that Chin-chin-wa, overpowered by feelings of hatred for the coward who had tried to stab him in the back, committed the act which was the cause of his ruin and of his exile to Formosa.

To an Englishman such an impulse would never have occurred. But Chin-chin-wa was no longer an Englishman ; his instincts had become Chinese, whilst yet something of the old nature may have remained deep within.

He did not kill Fa-to-man, but cut upon his forehead with the knife Fa-to-man had held, certain Chinese letters, forming a single word, signifying the name "Chin-chin-wa."

Horrible as the notion is, surely some justification may be found for Chin-chin-wa, who at that moment had at his mercy the man who had tried to *kill him from behind!*

In a few days' time, at the examination-hall, Chin-chin-wa was charged by Fa-to-man with

attempted murder, the proof of which was the wound; and this charge led in the end to the discovery of his English birth and consequently to his banishment from Chinese soil.

He was marked with the brand of exile upon his breast—a mark which I have seen with my own eyes.

This, briefly, is his story up to the time of his banishment.

Of that period there is little to tell. During seventeen years he *existed*, rather than lived, in Formosa, separated from all that makes life worth living. Once or twice his old friend, Yung Lao, came to visit him from Hong Kong, and when at length Yung Lao died, Chin-chin-wa inherited his vast fortune, although he well knew that riches were of little use to him who was an exile in Formosa.

True, he had liberty to a certain extent, and he was well treated; but none the less was he an exile, and as an exile he was guarded, lest he should endeavour to escape.

At the expiration of seventeen years, there came his pardon, brought about, by the strange working of fate, through the instrumentality of his old enemy, Fa-to-man.

Fa-to-man had, during these years, reached a high position in the State. At length, however, there came a day when he was found to be a traitor of the most dangerous class, and as such was condemned to public execution in Pekin.

The name upon his brow had been long forgotten ; but it was remembered now that Fa-to-man was condemned to a traitor's death ; and perhaps the authorities made inquiry as to the exile. This is difficult to decide.

But the fact remains that when Fa-to-man, approaching the hour of his doom with Chinese calm, made the request, as though divining that Chin-chin-wa's release was possible, that his old enemy might never be set free, he was told that even then Chin-chin-wa's pardon had been signed. Thus was Fa-to-man's punishment made complete !

So Fa-to-man was executed as a traitor, and his old rival was set free.

It was some time before the day on which he told me his story, and indeed before we left Tientsin, that Chin-chin-wa chanced to show me his pardon. Bonsel was not present, or I fancy he would not have done so ; indeed, the conversation which led to this would not have taken place in all probability had my host been present, for we were talking of his friend, Shan-min-yuen.

I had asked Chin-chin-wa how he came to have heard of Shan-min-yuen ; for, as even I could see, great changes must have occurred in the government of the country within the past seventeen years, and I could not suppose that whilst in exile Chin-chin-wa could have been posted up in the doings of the day.

His
had b
min-yu

I ask
imaginec
was not
But in t
what he
very fin
the piec

He prod
of me ; the
as I took them to

ver was to the effect that his pardon
signed in a secondary way by Shan-

him how he knew that it was so ; for I
that the document referring to his release

in the exile's hands.
thereupon produced
written upon some
silk rolled round
s attached.

and laid it in front
inted to two letters,

"That," he said, "is the signature of Shan-min-yuen. The one above it is the signature of the Supreme Power. This man, Shan-min-yuen, occupies a certain position in the State, not necessarily a high one (though it may be so). His signature here is simply meant to guarantee the authenticity of the document."

I looked at the writing with curiosity.

"But why do you keep this?" I asked.

"It is necessary for me to do so," he answered with something of bitterness in his words. "You seem to forget that I am an exile. As an exile, I have a mark upon my breast. Whoever discovers that I bear that mark may kill me like a dog ; a whole village would set upon me as I entered it, did I wear my chest bare. So I keep this pardon, given to me for the purpose, to counteract the

meaning of the mark on my breast. Do you follow me?"

"Perfectly; you have this greater thing to show in case of need, to prove that you are not exiled, but are protected by the Supreme Power. What are these words?" I pointed to the writing before me.

"That is the pardon," he answered; "a few words only, but sufficient, when thus signed, to render my life a sacred thing in China. They simply mean,

"'PERMIT AND GIVE HONOUR
TO CHIN-CHIN-WA.'"

* * * * *

We left Tientsin without having discovered any trace of the carter. By Chin-chin-wa's wish—though perhaps I was the first to make the suggestion—I paid off the guide brought with me from Shanghai; a guide was now quite an unnecessary thing, as I had for companion a man who could prove far more useful to me than a guide; moreover, the Shanghai guide would actually have impeded our operations.

With Norris's fellow we acted differently, having determined to take him with us in hopes of his identifying the carter in Pekin.

Thus there were now three of us—Chin-chin-wa

—the g
—and n
elf.

We l
our int
with the
the follo
Tientsin during the afternoon, it being
on to ride all night, and, if possible
lay of horses sent ahead, reach Pekin

Before
my revo.
himself
showing
carries,
trust in
accustomed to the use of the revolver.

Chin-chin-wa one of
d that he did not
refused the offer,
ed knife which he
he would prefer to
icy, as he is not

We had four ponies—one each and an additional animal for the baggage. This pony the guide took under his charge, and in this fashion we set out upon our journey, passing for some time through the streets of Tientsin, and at last, reaching the country, when we were able slightly to increase our speed.

Chin-chin-wa and myself rode side by side, the guide, with the baggage-pony, preceding us, in order that we might not stray from the appointed route.

To converse with the man by my side I found to be most interesting. Not only had his past life been full of almost incredible adventure, but his information and knowledge I speedily found to be vast indeed. But, as is generally the case, the wisest men are the most modest men, and thus it was with Chin-chin-wa.

Travelling in North China was novel to me. There is an atmosphere almost of the desert about the flat country through which we passed, cultivated though it was upon all sides. I suppose this impression arose from the clouds of dust which our ponies stirred as we went along, and from the great heat of the declining sun.

Night came on apace, but with the darkness came also the moon. We continued riding until the following morning, when (at, I think, about nine o'clock) we arrived at the village where fresh ponies—the relay sent on by us from Tientsin—were awaiting us.

We had, up till now, enjoyed nothing which could be termed rest, although we had, indeed, occasionally halted for a brief space either for food or drink. Except for these brief stoppages, we had been in the saddle all night, and being unaccustomed to such prolonged exercise, I, for one, was in such a condition of fatigue that I could almost have slept in the saddle as we went along.

To my delight a rest was decreed, and, leaving the guide to make all arrangements, I was not long in finding a place where I could sleep under cover. This was a small apartment—the best the little inn could furnish—a chamber, open to a courtyard in which a great number of mules and carts were congregated, and possessing no furniture, unless that part of the earthen floor which was higher

than the other, and which served as a substitute for a couch, might be looked upon as such.

Chin-chin,
but pres-
entry.

He has told me, with the man, of considerably deeper usually are.

I scarcely listened to his words. Nothing of great interest had transpired, so far as I gathered.

I have no recollection of anything further until I awoke, or partially awoke, some time later to notice that Chin-chin-wa was lying opposite me—that is to say that his feet almost touched mine, whilst his massive frame lay beyond.

He was lying upon his back, and had carelessly cast his rich silk clothing in a heap upon the ground, or, possibly, it might have fallen, whilst he slept, from the raised part of the floor on to that below.

As I was placed I could not see his face or the upper part of his body; but I remember dreamily conjecturing that, from the amount of clothing which lay upon the floor, it was probable his chest was bare; and that, therefore, I might see the

brand of exile of which he had spoken, did I trouble to rise.

I was in that half-waking, half-dreaming state in which it is difficult to distinguish the real from the dream, so delightfully are the two blended.

The noises from the courtyard, which was within a few feet of us, seemed to mingle in a kind of harmony. I was as one dreaming, and yet not dreaming; for, whilst I was to a certain extent conscious, I could not believe that I was so; sleep still hung heavily upon me, and possibly the great warmth of the air—the sun being now high in the heavens, and the day well advanced—may have influenced my slow return to full waking.

There was nothing peculiar in my condition, for I have often experienced the same, both before and since, on returning from sleep to waking.

It was during this brief interval that an event occurred which speedily called my senses into full play.

Whilst I lay still for a moment or two a Chinaman stole from the yard to our chamber, which, as I have said, was open to the court; and I, dreamily watching his movements, wondered what would be the result should he look upon Chin-chin-wa's breast.

Still believing the vision to be a dream, I did not cry out, until it flashed across me like lightning, that I was awake and that the Chinese vagabond had seized Chin-chin-wa's rich clothing in his hands.

As he
the ya
chin-wa
speed :
the crow
sapeared rapidly amongst the carts in
ny shout went forth. Instantly Chin-
as on his feet, whilst I rushed at full
the robber, threading my way through
of carts.

So ra
into the
behind :

As I u
chin-wa
that he w

Almost a
behind us.

at the thief passed
I, a second or two

e tall form of Chin-
I saw, as it did so,

t a shout arose from
who were a little

way in front of us turned immediately. The shout was repeated as the robber passed, whereupon three of them cast themselves forward upon Chin-chin-wa to stop his pursuit. But the three men were as nothing to the great strength of Chin-chin-wa, who dashed them on either side.

All the same, the momentary impediment had been the robber's gain.

Then fresh shouts seemed to arise all around, and men hurried from the houses on either side, and, almost in a second of time, it was as though we were flying from a crowd that gathered in pursuit, and not ourselves pursuing the thief in front.

It flashed across me suddenly, as I ran, that Chin-chin-wa's breast was bare, and that the whole village were after the exiled man !

A great fear, amounting almost to frenzy, lent speed to my steps. The pace had grown terrific ; the thief was the most nimble-footed Chinaman I had ever seen ; but still we made upon him step by step, Chin-chin-wa a yard in front of me, I desperately striving to decrease that space.

The thief turned suddenly to the left ; we were in the open country now, and I could hear the crowd shouting and screaming behind. A new fear came over me.

Where was Chin-chin-wa's pardon, since he was naked to the waist ?

To catch the robber must mean our death ; for to secure him meant delay, and delay the falling into the villagers' hands !

As I realised the terrible truth, I tripped, recovered myself, then tripped again and fell, and, even as I did so I saw that Chin-chin-wa's hand had descended upon the robber's shoulder, and felt that both he, the exile, and I, his friend, were surely doomed.

My fall partially stunned me, but I can recall, as though it had been a dream, a great noise on all hands, and the tall figure of Chin-chin-wa standing above me, holding out something in his hands, whilst he shouted loudly, ere my senses became confused.

* * * * *

The Chinese proprietor of the inn had been the

first to pass the word that had been echoed on all sides. Was he who had recognised the exile's mark : we passed, and it was he who had set the whole spread age on our track. For the word "exile" went to from house to house, and with that word to hurt in in the pursuit, and land of had no home in the It has of imminent danger. Had the resolute pursuit of the thief could have done under the conscience all sides his fellow-creatures were . blood, all would have been lost; for the man who had committed the theft, and whom we were then pursuing, had taken, with the silk raiment, the pardon which protected Chin-chin-wa's life, and, had he escaped, the exile would have come to a terrible end. For it is useless to suppose that the grandeur and strength of a single man can save him from the multitude. He may, indeed, die like a lion, but that is all. By the stealing of his pardon, the thief had left Chin-chin-wa an outlaw,—a thing to be killed at all costs, no matter what the means.

That the thief had had designs upon the pardon is impossible, because it was only upon our rushing from the court of the inn in mad pursuit that the exile's mark was seen; but the man in stealing the clothes had stolen that which chanced to be attached, and for the double theft he paid the *penalty*.

When I fell, the crowd were just upon us; but Chin-chin-wa shouted with a loud voice, and though two or three of the foremost sprang upon him he struck them back. The others heard and saw, and none could disobey because he held what he had now regained—the pardon of the Supreme Power!

So the crowd seized upon the thief instead, and hanged him by the ankles to a tree, so that the blood might rush into his head, until at length he died.

WITHO

KIN WALLS.

PERSONALLY, I f
So thick was the
had not been so serious as it might have been, and,
with the exception of a severe headache and
sundry bruises, I had come out of the matter
scatheless.

was but little injured.
the road, that my fall

As for Chin-chin-wa, he had received a cut in the left arm from the knife of one of those who had sprung upon him; fortunately it was but a surface-wound, and being well versed in the surgery of the Chinese, he had treated it in his own fashion before I was sufficiently recovered to offer him my assistance in binding the wound.

As the fire of excitement, once set ablaze, is not easily quenched, we hastened to leave the village.

In less than an hour we had bid the little inn adieu, and were once more upon the road, notwithstanding that I greatly feared the heat of the sun, which was beating upon us as we rode.

I carried a sunshade, it is true, and wore my

blackened glasses; but the first proved as little able to protect me from the power of the sun's rays as were the last-named to keep the clouds of dust from reaching the eyes.

The country was of the same character as that through which we had passed previously; that is to say, flat and cultivated on all sides, so as to be uninteresting to a degree. Occasionally, we approached the winding river, and I was amused to notice the laborious method whereby the Chinese sailors navigated their vessels against the stream.

Two or more of the crew are harnessed, as horses might be, to the rope which is attached midway down the mast, and thus upon the land they expend their strength in dragging their comrades on the boat slowly onwards.

But, to tell the truth, my thoughts dwelt more upon the perils through which we had passed than upon the scenery around. We had pressed forward and left the crowd behind with some difficulty, the pardoned exile being a subject for curiosity, alike in the fact of his pardon and in his own striking person; whilst for our part we were anxious to escape from notoriety as far as possible.

As we rode onwards (slowly, on account of the heat), I questioned Chin-chin-wa as to what, in his opinion, should be our action upon reaching Pekin.

"My own plans," I said, "were, as you know,

mainly dependent upon chance. It was by chance I received the swallow's message, and, till now, I have trusted to chance to guide me ; but matters have come to a point where we must assist chance more or less. Let us first seek for this Carter ; but, in the event of non-success, we should be prepared to take steps of a definite nature. We cannot by merely going to Pekin, to run again for certain that he is ace grounds, it would be more easy."

"I have considered the question from two or three points of view," was Chin-chin-wa's reply, after a short pause, "and this is what I have briefly set down as the position. As you say, truly, we are not at all likely to run against the captive by chance ; indeed, I am inclined to think that our search may be an affair requiring the utmost perseverance before it is crowned with success. That success will be ours sooner or later, if Norris is alive, I do not doubt. It is a mistake to doubt when one wishes to succeed.

"Granting, then, that our residence in Pekin is to be a long one, my identity will, at some future time, be certain to become known.

"As soon as this occurs, the authorities may wonder why I should have come to Pekin, and be living in company with an Englishman in their city. The position must be looked upon with regard to myself in the first place, not from a

selfish motive, but for the reason that caution and judgment alone can aid us in our object. Indeed, so much must my personal position in the matter be regarded, that I had serious thoughts, upon my journey from Shanghai to Tientsin, of meeting you merely to inform you that, on reconsidering the matter, I had decided, that your search was more likely to be successful without my assistance than with it. I may tell you frankly that, until I heard that you had some idea of consorting with a Chinaman—this man, Shan-min-yuen—in Pekin, I was still doubtful as to how I should act; whether to desert you, when I had actually agreed to join you through Mr. Dicey's intervention, or to accompany you. But the knowledge that without my advice on the matter, you were likely to seek counsel from this German gentleman's friend decided me to take my stand by your side, for good or ill; and chiefly for this reason,—that you, who are an Englishman, might be led astray on many points, either purposely or otherwise, by this Chinaman and his friends; there was the possibility of such a thing—I know my adopted countrymen.

"Do not think your interests could possibly become theirs! Not so: what would they gain by allowing it to be so? So I adhered to the decision I made in Shanghai, and consequently am with you to-day.

"You have had an example a few hours ago of how unfortunate an ally I may prove. Virtually I

have added to your expedition a certain amount of danger by accompanying you. It remains to be seen, however, whether my assistance may prove of a character which will counterbalance this."

I thanked him for his candour, and begged him to proceed. He ~~continued~~:

"Let us look with my position none the less needful to Pekin at present communication. I might have done

government, though I should do this. My pardon is full and complete ; it was ratified by the special envoy of the government before I left Formosa. But, still, it would be but gracious upon my part, would it not, to go to the North and to return my thanks in person for an act of mercy of so extraordinary a kind ? Not only am I pardoned, but my very pardon, as it were, makes me a naturalised Chinaman, and the government cannot have realised that my life is now by that signature protected from all ill at the hands of my fellows. Although I occupy no position of power, I have a life protected by the most august authority—the pardon you have seen ; but," he added, "you have seen also that there are still dangers for Chin-chin-wa to face."

He smiled—and, after a momentary pause, continued :

atter in connection with an egotistic view, but I could not have come here for Mr. Dicey's sake some later date, I report myself to the means necessary that

"When I go to Pekin, I may report myself; but I do not intend to do so at once; indeed, if necessary—that is, if the safety of William Norris requires it—I shall never do so. Questions, however, may early arise at court. 'Why is Chin-chin-wa here, and why does he not come to the Supreme Court; and what does he do in Pekin, with an English friend?' What will be the result of such questions once raised? Something disastrous for me and for your search, without doubt. We must avoid this."

"I follow you," was my reply. "Was this the reason for your asking me in Tientsin if I was prepared to adopt the Chinese dress?"

"In a measure, yes. I had not then determined how soon it would be advisable for you to do so, though I fancied it would be a necessity at some future time."

"And have you now decided?" I asked.

"I have. We enter Pekin early to-morrow. I think that you should be dressed in Chinese garb when we pass into the city."

Notwithstanding my apparent callousness upon the subject, I was startled. I had readily agreed, on a former occasion, to follow Chin-chin-wa's wish, should it be necessary for me to put aside my European clothing; but I confess that, now that it came to the point—now that the hour was at hand and had been definitely fixed upon for my doing so, I felt inclined to recall my former consent; for,

absurd aside my entering dress of I was : safety as dear.

ough it may seem, the idea of casting English identity, even for a time, and of ekin as a Chinaman, or at least in the e Chinese race, gave me the feeling that ering the last tie which bound me to dy grown strangely dear.

There is an around to forfe living wi Chin-chin-wa s pro ery feeling that one it, which throws action. I was about ink there is a man without a qualm to ie been on the eve of entering Pekin bent upon a search already sufficiently dangerous, and had he passed through all that we had passed through earlier in the day.

But I thrust back the disinclination to adopt the Chinese dress which overcame me.

Then I looked at Chin-chin-wa, and it struck me, perhaps more fully than it had ever done before, that it would have been difficult indeed, had it not been for his voice, to believe that his bronzed face and features, which closely resembled the Chinese, could belong to a countryman of my own.

Dust and sun seemed of small account to him. He had no covering for his eyes, and none for his head save the round hat of fine straw which I guessed he must have purchased in Tientsin.

Magnificent specimen of manhood as he was he looked curiously out of place upon the pony,

which his figure seemed to dwarf as he rode by my side.

It had never occurred to him that I should be likely to object to his proposal. He had recommenced speaking, but for a few seconds, I was occupied with my own thoughts, and did not listen to him.

I was thinking of what his life had been in the past.

He too had taken the Chinese dress, as I was about to do, but indeed in a far deeper sense ; he had taken it as the garb of a lifetime ; I took it as that of a few days, to be cast off again at any time, as I might please ; and I wondered if Chin-chin-wa had hesitated years and years ago as a boy when he made that choice.

"No," I thought, "that man has never known what indecision is."

"You understand," he was saying, "that although a few may notice it as strange that you, who are an Englishman, should be dressed as a Chinaman, and this without any attempt to imitate the race in the matter of shaven head or pig-tail, you will be less conspicuous to the many, than you would be as the English friend, pure and simple, of the returned exile, Chin-chin-wa. For if the matter does attract the attention of a thinking man here and there, it is a very natural conclusion to arrive at, that you are, in a measure, following my footsteps, and seeking to join the Chinese race.

You are nothing comprehensible as I have myself.

"This upon all case. I in Pekin awakened are; an diminishing that interest almost to a minimum, we turn it, in addition, into a false channel—as we shall assuredly do by your assumption of the Chinese garb—we shall gain not a little, in the secrecy with which we desire to surround our possible doings."

"Then," I interrupted, "allowing that I am willing to change my dress at once, how is it to be done? Shall we get the necessary garments in some village as we pass, or where?"

"I will arrange all that. We shall stop for a short time at a Chinese inn, outside the walls. I shall send the guide on in front. He will purchase everything to my directions."

"But here is a point," I said. "Can we rely upon this guide's silence? Will he not be apt to make this a subject of conversation with his friends?"

ew, and pre-suppos-
at once belie you
uarantee is not the
if we remain long
erest or conjecture
o who and what we
ee that if, besides

"Not when I have spoken to him ; but, indeed, it would make little difference should he do so. It is not amongst the lower classes of people that I would seek to conceal your nationality. You must look upon your garb chiefly as a device to protect you from a second glance whilst in the street ; that is all we aim at. Those who come actually into contact with you will, of course, know and see that you are an Englishman. It would be quite absurd to contemplate anything else, and quite impossible to achieve it."

"In that case I do not see what is to be gained."

"Excuse me ; you cannot have listened to all I said. This is the object to be gained. We are neither of us brought prominently before the notice of the higher class—the ruling powers of Pekin ; and it is with these persons we have to deal, in that my deeds may be questioned by them. If we do come beneath their notice, I step forward, not you ; I am the man who leads, and you wish to follow in my steps ; and thus we conceal the truth, that I am working for you, the Englishman, and in concert with you, upon some work which is apparently secret, and for that reason calling for inquiry. We do not yet know who the enemy is —whether a great man or a mere robber ; he is an unknown quantity to us, so are we to him ; but we have the advantage in being aware of the existence of the unknown. The moment he learns of our existence, our position is weakened.

"We hold a chance in this, that the enemy fears nothing, and suspects nothing. We must not risk the loss of it."

Understanding his motives, if not altogether, at least in part, I agreed, without further discussion, to fall

"We shall have
Chinamen :
part, of course,
expected to
English brother
succeed in hamper

enter Pekin as two
cessity, upon your
, as you might be
uite clear of your
niture, might suc-
n no small degree.
e Chinese. Your

"We shall have
guide can procure you English food, for I do not
suppose you would care to live upon food which I
am accustomed to live upon. Our first endeavours
will be devoted to the search for this carter, and,
during this time, you will see something of the
capital.

"We shall do well, I think, to keep these ponies,
because we may require them if the escape of
Norris is affected by stratagem, in which case flight
may be our only safeguard.

"If, however, we can obtain his release by
government intervention, so much the better ; but
I am very doubtful as to this. First of all we have
to discover two things ; whether Norris still lives ;
and thereafter where he is confined.

"If we fail to find the carter, I shall go to
the Imperial City alone, and, by keeping eyes and

ears on the alert, it may be that I shall discover something in the nature of a clue. If not, and if we are indeed reduced to the last resort, you have your introduction to our friend, Shan-min-yuen. That may then be of use."

"Your ideas," I answered, "to a great extent, coincide with mine as to our mode of prosecuting the search. We are equally inclined to trust a good deal to some fortunate chance."

"What else can we do," was his reply, "further than what I have said, in a city like Pekin? We might, indeed, frame endless plans, but the success or non-success of one might render the others useless; and I am rather inclined to say, let us work gradually, and decide upon fresh action as events require and as we advance."

Our conversation then drifted into other channels, and thus, sometimes conversing and sometimes riding silently, we neared a great pagoda, with a tree growing out of the top of it, and still journeyed on till night fell. Then we rested for a time, partaking of our evening meal, and sleeping thereafter; for we were now at no great distance from Pekin.

Daylight found us at a little inn but half a mile from the city walls.

THE SEAR

E CARTER.

IT was at this point
me (as had bee
Chinese dress.

came necessary for
d) to assume the

The guide was sent into the city to procure the needful raiment, and to return with this as soon as possible. I was unaware, however, that Chin-chin-wa had any intention of accompanying him, or of entering the city prior to my doing so, as now appeared to be the case. He explained to me his reason for this—that we should have some fixed residence, if possible, before nightfall, and that the quieter this residence the more advantageous.

When in Pekin formerly, Chin-chin-wa had lived with a curio-dealer, so he told me—a man whose dealings were almost entirely with the Chinese, for at that time customers of any other nationality were a rarity ; and here he had found board and lodging during a lengthy stay in the capital.

If this dealer was still alive, Chin-chin-wa was anxious to find him ; for, from previous acquaintance, he knew the man to be fairly discreet ; and

he was of opinion that, if the dealer was as he had been eighteen years ago, still in a position to receive lodgers in his house, we could not be more fortunate in the choice of a home.

During the period of his absence much might, however, have occurred; and the dealer, if still alive, had perhaps changed his residence; if so Chin-chin-wa intended to discover his present abode, or, in default, to light upon some lodging, which he should engage against his return in my company later in the day.

I foresaw the prudence of arranging a lodging, and left myself entirely in the hands of Chin-chin-wa. Accordingly he set out, accompanied by the guide, leaving me to the solitude of my own thoughts for a few hours to come.

I do not think I have spent many days in which the hours dragged so slowly. I slept for a time, it is true, when first left alone; but shortly the bustle in the courtyard of the inn, and the noise made by the entry of mules and carts, banished sleep, and from that time forth I was employed chiefly in counting the hours and calculating the period at which Chin-chin-wa or the guide might be expected to return.

I did not then know that Chin-chin-wa had instructed the guide to meet him at a certain place in Pekin, and to await his arrival there; and thus I looked for the return of either, and not of the two in company.

The hours went sluggishly by, and brought no signs of either Chin-chin-wa or the guide. I consumed the cold chicken which the guide had left with me, and strolled a little way from the inn, endeavouring in various ways to pass the time; but have been very hstanding.

Afternoons grow alar
be some

Distance Pekin; but half a mile from the walls, Chin-chin-wa my guide should have returned long ere now. What had happened? Had Chin-chin-wa fallen into danger a second time by reason of the exile's mark, and had I lost both my ally and my guide?

A strange fatality seemed to me to hang about our movements: but two days had we been upon the road, and already, for the second time, misfortune seemed to have fallen upon us. I strove to banish my doubts, and in this manner passed another hour, when the certainty of misfortune came upon me with full force.

My position was far from an enviable one. I was alone in a strange land, half a mile from Pekin, not knowing by what means to gain the city, or how to proceed should I reach and enter the gates, and I was tied down for a lengthy period to come, by the uncertainty of doubt.

Were I to set out in person for the capital, I might easily reach it before nightfall, that is to say, before the closing of the gates, which I had been told took place at six o'clock; but allowing that I entered the city in ample time, and that I should have found little trouble in guiding myself to the nearest gateway, I should in all probability risk passing Chin-chin-wa or the guide upon my way, as we might choose different routes; and thus whilst I had gone upon the search for them they might have returned to find that to seek for me had now become necessary, owing to my having disappeared during their prolonged absence. All things considered, I decided upon waiting patiently, in hopes that all might still be well; but when my watch told me that it was five o'clock, patience resolved itself into despair, and I looked forward to a lengthy and anxious night, in which I should be troubled and kept from sleeping by all manner of conjectures and doubts.

It struck me that the situation, curiously enough, must be somewhat analogous to that in which William Norris had been placed a year ago; but to appearance my position was even worse than his had been, because I had no carter to depend upon, and no one near me who had the slightest knowledge of my wishes. Were Chin-chin-wa and my guide actually the victims of some misfortune, nothing seemed more likely to my disturbed mind than that I, too, should disappear from the world as silently

and as surely as had the man who had trusted his message to the swallow's wing !

I began to understand how easy it is for a man to be lost in a strange land, and to be lost in such a way that there is no trace left, no clue given whereby the labyrinth of a silent fate may be disclosed.

At six o'Clock either
of either
sion be

At the
difficulty
be upset,

no sign of the return
guide. My depres-
sion was
increased.
quest, I was met by
my plans seemed to
fail. I can only
more guess the cause

than I could foresee what was left for me to do. Something of an unprecedented nature had apparently happened to detain both Chin-chin-wa and the guide, and a sullen despair overcame me as I recollect that the gates of Pekin closed at six o'clock, and that for twelve hours thereafter there was no possibility of the return of either of the two, for already they must be shut within the city gates.

Endeavour as I might to look the matter calmly in the face, this was far from easy. In the morning I would still await their return for, say, a couple of hours. After that time, it was questionable what was to be done. If I followed my natural inclination, I should proceed to the Legation in Pekin, but to all intents would seriously impede my search for William Norris by so doing ; for the absence of

THE SEARCH FOR THE CARTER. 175

my companions would result in inquiry which would certainly to a large extent, indirectly, affect the cause of him whom I had come to seek.

Whilst I was debating thus in no enviable frame of mind, to my extreme astonishment, Chin-chin-wa entered the yard and approached me.

To one who had indeed looked upon him as lost, the revulsion of feeling was sudden in the extreme. I could merely give vent to an ejaculation of surprise, and a sense of thankfulness filled me—in strong contrast to that isolation which had dwelt in me, and around me, but a few moments previously.

Chin-chin-wa appeared to be uninjured: my suspicions of misfortune had proved groundless.

He hastened to explain. I need not give his explanation in full. The following is the essence of what he had to tell.

After leaving me, he and the guide had proceeded, as arranged, into the city. They had parted company shortly after passing the gate, the guide going in one direction to purchase my prospective clothing, Chin-chin-wa in the other to seek our future home. But, before separating, Chin-chin-wa had given the guide instructions to meet him at a certain eating-house, and to remain there awaiting him, should he be detained. This the guide agreed to do.

Chin-chin-wa set out for the house where he had formerly lived, to find, on his arrival there, that he had not been far astray in his conjecture before

leaving me, that the dealer might have changed his abode, for such was actually the case, and the new residence was—so he was informed—in a district far distant from where he now was.

However, he set out again ; but, on account of the great distance between the two districts, he found the domain of the cur-
man to receive us.

Leaving the dealer's eating-house, where we arrived ; but, as it was well.

Chin-wa started for the long journey, he finally pired, the guide, after waiting for his return for a prolonged period, had set out after him, knowing the district and the house at which Chin-chin-wa had first called.

Thus it came that the guide committed the mistake which I might have made ; he had set out upon a search without due consideration of the events which might meantime occur.

Chin-chin-wa, no little enraged, had determined to wait for the guide till the last moment, and the man did finally return in sufficient time for the two to leave the city before the gates were closed.

"Just as we reached the gate," concluded Chin-chin-wa, "an exclamation from the guide arrested my steps. We were right after all, Mr. Vanscombe, to trust to chance. Had my old friend lived in his former dwelling, your guide would not have stupidly set out to track my steps ; and, had not he done so,

we should not have been passing out of Pekin almost at the moment when the gates were swung forwards and closed."

"What do you mean?" I asked.

"I mean," he replied, "that your guide has, by a strange chance, hit upon the very carter who was with William Norris when he left him in Pekin. He had scarcely time to explain to me that this man had just passed us entering the city, and I had but a moment to seize from him this bundle, your Chinese clothes, before the gate swung round upon its hinge, shutting me without the walls, and the guide, who had turned after the important clue, within."

"The carter found!" I exclaimed, starting to my feet. "I cannot believe it."

"But," he replied, "the carter is found nevertheless."

So the fates had been for us instead of against us. All seemed likely to be plain sailing henceforth. My only fear was lest the guide should have lost sight of the man after all; but this, Chin-chin-wa assured me, was far from likely.

The guide had bounded after him, as man and cart entered the city; and there could be little doubt that he had secured him, and would detain him without fail against our arrival on the following day.

It was indeed a fortunate chance, and the knowledge of the discovery took from me almost entirely

the memory of the long weary hours through which I had waited for Chin-chin-wa's return.

Perhaps I hoped and expected too much from the finding of the carter. Chin-chin-wa expressed his opinion to this effect. I could not myself see



I was completing my toilette under Chin-chin-wa's directions.—p. 178.

where and in what way he could fail us, but fail us he did, signally and effectually, on the following day. The next morning I was just completing my new toilet under Chin-chin-wa's direction, feeling, I must confess, somewhat as I have felt on the eve of

a fancy ball, notwithstanding the serious nature of the circumstances in which I now assumed a foreign dress, when the guide arrived, he having seized the earliest opportunity of leaving the city on the re-opening of the gates.

To my delight I saw that he was not alone: the carter had accompanied him into the yard. I looked at this carter—at his heavy features and sleepy-looking eye—and a sudden pain went through me as it were in a mental whisper, “What if he should not remember?—what if he have forgotten Norris entirely during the months which have gone?”

Chin-chin-wa was already speaking to him, but the man stared vacantly in answer to his words, and that was all. Then, so far as I could gather from his tone of voice and the abrupt way in which he spoke, Chin-chin-wa proceeded to question him narrowly; and, after listening for some little time, the man addressed opened his lips and answered something—something very short.

Chin-chin-wa again spoke several words: the carter briefly replied. Then Chin-chin-wa turned angrily upon the guide, and poured forth a torrent of anger, whilst the guide stood, with his head bent down, thoroughly cowed.

But in a little he half raised his eyes with a sullen, dogged look upon his face.

Chin-chin-wa turned to me.

“The guide states that this is the carter, without

a doubt : are we to believe him ? This fellow here, he says, is the carter whom he left with William Norris ; and the carter knows absolutely nothing of the whole affair. Either the guide is lying, or the carter has forgotten entirely what happened a year ago. Which of them are we to believe ? "

" Have you any possibility of recovering his memory ? "

" I have tried speaking to him more fully, if you have heard me mention him further, and now it is useless."

" Please do not trouble me any longer about this man," I urged ; and at my desire he questioned the man at great length, obtaining an occasional word in answer, and that was all.

" It is quite useless," he said, finally ; " he has no recollection whatever of being taken a prisoner, or of having been employed by an English gentleman or by this guide ; and the guide, on the contrary, asserts that this is the man. What are we to make of it ? "

" Send them into the road, and let them fight it out between them," I answered in thorough disgust. " How did the guide secure him, and why did he bring him here, when he found that he had made a mistake ? "

" He says there is no mistake ; and has promised the carter a reward. He admits having found him as dead as a stone as far as his mental powers are

concerned, but that was not his affair. He was to find him and to bring him to us; these were his instructions, and he says that he has fulfilled them."

"Perhaps he is right," I answered angrily. "The specimen of humanity he has succeeded in bringing us is certainly to all appearance utterly brainless. Send them away, I beg you, and let us consider what is to be done. Give the carter an hour or two to cudgel his brains, and tell the guide to assist him. If the guide cannot do it, there is little chance."

"I am of your opinion," answered Chin-chin-wa. "I shall put it to the guide that we refuse to believe him, and that this will injure him as a guide, unless he can prove to us that he has spoken true, by causing the carter to remember, and tell us what he recollects."

The guide, who caught some of our words, notwithstanding that we spoke quickly, looked up as Chin-chin-wa again addressed him, as though he already knew what burden we were about to lay upon him.

Thus, what had seemed an hour or two ago to be a valuable gain had proved but useless in the end. I could not conceal my annoyance from Chin-chin-wa, whose philosophical calm throughout struck me as offering a singular contrast to my own feelings. Only for a moment had I seen him truly angered, and that had been when he had turned upon the

guide to accuse him of having brought a substitute in lieu of the man whom we sought.

Upon discussing the matter, we were inclined to place a degree of reliance in the guide rather than otherwise. For it seemed by no means improbable, that a man carter sho and th would had ac his earlier ac inquiries set o that the guide's intelligence as this actual occurrences ; to be, what the guide of a substitute, as we ather, judging from or his master and the Tientsin—it seemed upon the right rather than the wrong track.

In addition to this consideration, the finding of the carter meant the cessation of the guide's employment by us ; therefore, unless he had actually and honestly found the real man, he would not have been in a hurry to produce the sham, unless, indeed—and it was Chin-chin-wa who made this suggestion—he had been so frightened by the occurrence of the day before, when the thief had fled from the village inn, and the crowd of natives had pursued us like thirsting wolves, that he had desired from that hour to leave our service as soon as possible, through the production of a carter—the right one or the wrong.

There was, indeed, so much to be said on either side, that we were quite at a loss to decide whether we had really found the man sought for, virtually before we had commenced the search, or whether



The guide fell, in fear, upon his face.—*F.* 185.

we had been fooled by the guide, who was the only person who could aid us by identifying the carter when found.

It had become evident that, for various reasons, the guide was now useless to us. Personally, I was willing to do so much and that his dismission, in the way of stay with Chin-chin-wa, give him his freedom if he had found a fault that the result of his endeavours had been *nil*; if the second, it decidedly was; but, in either case he had now, by the production of the real man or the sham, become useless to us for the future.

So we summoned the guide, who was not far off, and who hastened to approach. I requested Chin-chin-wa to speak for me; for, personally, I have the greatest dislike to the use of pigeon-English.

Chin-chin-wa relieved me in the emergency, briefly informing the guide that I no longer required his services; that I was willing to pay him something extra on account of the sudden dismissal, but that I could not give him a character in writing, on account of what we still believed to be a deceit—the production of the carter.

Thus we had arranged, and thus I presume Chin-chin-wa had spoken. For answer, the guide turned

and left us, coming back to us directly, accompanied by the carter, to whom he now spoke rapidly, whilst the other answered him with a word or two as he proceeded. I was at a loss to understand the proceeding. Chin-chin-wa explained.

"The carter," he said, "is willing to remember everything as the guide questions him. I have had a most marvellous account of a great street robbery, which the guide has related, and which the carter corroborates: the man has made good use of his time. Whether this is actually the carter, or not, is a question still; but the guide has, with Chinese cunning, outrun himself. Just listen for a little. Observe the guide whilst I speak."

All this was said in a low and rapid voice to me. He spoke to the carter now. I was observing the guide.

At first astonishment overspread the guide's features; for, as Chin-chin-wa afterwards informed me, he put the carter through another catechism, to every point of which the man agreed, as he had agreed when addressed by the guide. Thus the falsity of the unthinking creature's evidence was at once apparent. As he proceeded, the guide fell, in fear, upon his face before Chin-chin-wa, crying out as though whining for mercy; and Chin-chin-wa spoke sternly to him, bidding him, as I guessed, to tell the truth—to admit that this was not the carter whom he had brought. But the guide refused to do this; and although admitting that the story which he

had just
absence
still insi
from the

ld was but his own conception, given in
any information from the carter, he
l that this was the man, as he had stated
st.

We dis~~is~~missed them both, as nothing was to be
gained, only re~~is~~
a little time, i~~s~~
so far into the
with him th~~is~~

es of the guide for
ight accompany us
: might then leave
: was sole guardian.

“We sh
when I que
home in Pe
ascertain where
to-night, in order that if there is possible difficulty
as to securing others, as is sometimes the case in
Pekin, I may send to buy these animals before he
leaves.”

“when we are at
any mishap I shall
are to be stabled

Upon this last suggestion we acted at a later
hour, for we learned that we might not easily
secure fresh steeds, were these to return to
Tientsin.

CHAPTER XII.

CHIN-CHIN-WA AND SHAN-MIN-YUEN MEET.

AND now at length we passed across the great plain encircling the massive and imposing wall. I was now dressed in Chinese garments, and felt strange in my Chinese cap, whilst my eyes suffered from the sun, in that my glasses had been laid aside ; but these discomforts were minimised by the glowing interest I felt in our surroundings as we neared the mighty wall.

What pygmies we seemed to be as we toiled through the dust, with the barren waste of ground stretching around us, and the walls of Pekin towering above us. I asked Chin-chin-wa how this wall compared with the other wall—the Great Wall of China—and his answer was this—

“The wall of Pekin owes its grandeur to its height and to its breadth more than to its length. Its uniform breadth is about sixteen paces, as you may some day measure for yourself ; but the Great Wall is a more wonderful thing on account of its vast length. In breadth this wall that you

look upon is nearly treble. The heights I cannot compare: this is much the greater. The Great Wall may not impress you, if you ever see it, this of Pekin must."*

I have not delayed the narrative of my diary by a detailed account of the country and of the villages through which we passed on our journey. We had upon the side of the road many interesting and curious sights. Hours spent upon the road were the eye looked over rice-fields on every side; the occasional appearance of his servants, male and female, the latter with their crushed feet half limping as they moved; and the sluggish Peih River ever and anon approaching us, with its lazy water and the painted junks upon its surface. Above us the scorching sun; beneath and around the dust.

Thus had it been during the hours of daylight; and by night the same, save that the moon cast a silence upon all around, and the country slept.

When we came to a village, each proved little different from the last. Beggars and lepers, and creatures with twisted limbs, beset us until we either

* The walls of Pekin, Chinese and Tartar, may be roughly estimated in total circumference to exceed twenty miles. The Tartar walls are those to which the diary refers, and are the greatest, averaging 50 feet in height and 40 feet in width, with buttresses every 60 or 70 yards.

distanced them, or reached the refuge of the native inn.

Of Pekin I shall similarly say but little, for writing, long after, my impressions become confused owing to the lapse of time ; and I shall confine my feeble description to a few words, lest I mingle later thoughts with those of my first impressions of the Great City of the Chinese.

From the first entry I was impressed with a sense of the city's greatness and vast ungraspable size ; not that I looked upon a mass of crowded streets, but rather that the wall perhaps fitly framed the vast desolation which separated house from house—desolation which even in the main streets seemed to hold its own in the great width of the triple roadway. For the roads of Pekin are, for the most part, divided into three portions, the centre division being narrow and raised, those on either side being broader, but decreased in width by drinking and fruit stalls, and by a myriad of tents and booths which form a species of lengthy and gigantic fair.

Such was the impression I formed of the great city of dust and crowded life as I rode silently by the side of Chin-chin-wa through the streets of Pekin.

After a lengthy journey, we came to a door in the side of a wall in one of the quieter streets ; and, upon knocking, we were admitted to the court within. We were upon foot, having dismissed



We were welcomed by a very old Chinaman.—*p. 190.*

ponies and guide some little way from the house where we had now arrived. We were welcomed by a very old Chinaman, who, I shortly discovered, spoke no word of English, and was therefore unable to enter into conversation with me.

This he made up for by pouring forth the full vehemence of his Chinese tongue upon Chin-chin-wa, for they had not seen one another till the previous day for fully seventeen years.

We were, I found, in quarters as comfortable as one could have hoped for. True, I should have to do without an English bed, and should be obliged to live in Chinese fashion ; but this I was prepared for, feeling assured that Chin-chin-wa would look after our mutual comfort as far as lay within his power.

Our future residence comprised several buildings, the proprietor being, so far as I could judge, now a wealthy man, whatever he may have been in the old time when first Chin-chin-wa had come to lodge with him.

One of these buildings, which consisted severally of but one story, was the curio-store ; and there I found much to interest me, for the aged dealer had collected a very large assortment of antique and valuable relics such as are to be found in few cities save Pekin, and there only to be amassed after diligent and lengthy research. Useless days succeed our arrival—days in which our quest seemed to be doomed, in that we did not advance a single step towards our goal.

Chin-chin-wa once said to me :

"This at least is saved : we do not now spend our time in a vain search for the carter, since we have found a substitute, or it may be the

real man, who has been of this service to us, that he has turned our energies into other channels, and shown us plainly that our first intentions would have resulted in waste of time alone."

So we rode about Pekin—Chin-chin-wa and I—upon the ~~the~~ ^{the} ~~service~~ ^{which} we had ultimately decided to lead us towards Pekin it seemed as far separated from ~~we~~ ^{as} ~~we~~ ^{had} been had a grave

Is it wonder five days' sojourn in Pekin, all hope left me? Of what use had been my assumption of the Chinese dress and the attempt to fall in with customs which belonged to their race? Of what use had been my journey of months from Europe? Of what use the swallow's message, now that Chin-chin-wa and I were realising our utter powerlessness to act, and facing inevitable failure at every turn?

Chin-chin-wa alone could assist me now, and his inquiries resulted—as how else could they?—in absolutely nothing at all. Yet I learned something of the Chinese during these days, and saw much of the great city; and the more I saw, the more did I perceive how numerous were the spots where Norris might be concealed, if, indeed, as I began to doubt, he was still a living man.

Is it necessary to detail every particular; to dwell upon every futile attempt?

We ransacked Pekin ; we entered prisons, where the men herded like wild beasts ; we went into strange places, where vice and filth and wickedness alone seemed to dwell ; and if there was a closed door, we opened it with a silvern key.

These days are past and gone ; they are like a hideous dream to me.

Yes, William Norris, we sought you in strange places and in dens of vice, but we did not find you there !

Upon the fifth evening, we were returning to the curio-store, walking silently side by side, for we had been where ponies would have been of little use, when of a sudden Chin-chin-wa spoke.

"You are hopeless, are you not ?" he said, looking at me as he spoke.

"Quite," was my reply.

"Then shall you abandon the search ?"

"I shall continue to live in Pekin," was my immediate and firm reply ; for the bare insinuation cut me, "until I either discover that Norris is a dead man, or until I find him alive and save him from his foes."

"Is that your settled determination ?"

"It is."

"Then I will tell you mine. I have never met a difficulty which I have not overcome. I shall overcome this. As surely as I now walk by your side, I shall find William Norris, come what may, alive or dead. To-morrow I go to the Imperial

City. If I discover nothing by this visit, then you must act. But I seem to feel that it is I who am now pitted against fate, and that it is I, Chin-chin-wa, who will be the indirect means of finding the man we seek.

"Yes, I whom we by entering I shall still you have to my idea (Chinese co -min-yuen, the man of d if by doing so, and grounds, I learn nothing, l you what kind of man d how far, according to look upon as that of a therefore worthy of consideration), you may trust him with the secret of your search."

"Be it so," I answered; "it has been my impression, from the first, that we should not have wasted time in this search amongst the slums and lower places in Pekin. When I showed you the paper brought me by the swallow, you, too, agreed that we should fill in the word, 'palace'; we should have acted upon that if we placed any faith in our own interpretation."

"So you blame me," was his reply, "and perhaps rightly; but, this you will admit, that in so vast a city we have always gained a little in knowing where the man *is not*. If we find that he is not in the Imperial City, the past is not all lost, because there is a great area where we have already sought, reducing the work to be done. Perhaps, as you say, we should at once have acted upon our first

interpretation of the message, although our ideas were then unconsciously influenced by the only thought which occurred to us—the sacred Imperial grounds—and for that reason, namely, because we so readily came to this conclusion, I feel it to be too simple a solution. Norris is not a prisoner in the Imperial grounds."

"But still you go to the Imperial City: what use can it be, if you are confident that Norris is elsewhere? I, for my part, think that much time has been lost, for we have done nothing, and who knows what every hour may mean to Norris!"

"True," was Chin-chin-wa's answer, "that I go to the Imperial City, but I do so more with the intention of prospecting, and chiefly to see this man, Shan-min-yuen, in order that I may be able to advise you either to 'Go to him and tell him all,' or 'Beware.' Yet it seems to me that deliberate search will never bring us to Norris, but that some chance may; for I have the feeling strong upon me, contradicting all sense of despair in a strange manner, that, if we wait, we shall find him in the end."

On the following day, before noon, Chin-chin-wa dressed in silks of magnificent embroidery, such as I had never seen.

"It is hard," he said to me, as I stood beside him, feeling in my more ordinary Chinese garb as the beggar may feel when he looks upon the king,

His first trace of me. It was the first to his individual life, coming from such a man, it struck

In a little *alanquin*, borne by four Chinamen, stood at the door; and as Chin-chin-wa took his seat, and was borne away, I noticed that his face was marked as with a deep and bitter sorrow, the sadness of a disappointed life.

I did not stir from my Pekin home during his absence, for although knowing something of Pekin by now, I still feared to stray, and could have profited nothing by an idle stroll along the dusty streets.

My thoughts dwelt upon Chin-chin-wa more than upon our useless search, for it had been as a revelation to me to read the secret of his heart.

It was late in the day when Chin-chin-wa returned. Those who know the great distances to be traversed in Pekin can understand that his journey was a long one, and he had also been detained in the Imperial City until audience was

granted him as one holding the pardon of the Supreme Power.

Chin-chin-wa was still of the same mood as that in which he had left us in the morning. His visit to the Imperial City seemed but to have added to his sorrow. He was singularly reticent as to what had occurred, so much so as to lead me to believe that he did not wish to be questioned upon the subject. I could only conjecture that it must have been an ordeal, trying in the extreme for a man of his nobility and pride of nature, to bow his head to a government and its representatives as one who offered thanks to those recognising him only as a Chinaman and as the pardoned exile, but as nothing more.

I could understand that bitterness had seared his heart—he had had to bend the head to those who by right, had all been well in the old time, would have cringed before him.

So as this concerned my search not at all, delicacy forbade my trespassing, and I heard but little of what had passed. But this I did hear—that Chin-chin-wa had seen the man Shan-min-yuen, that he had spoken to him, and that he had conceived an intense loathing and hatred for him from the first moment of meeting.

Later he spoke to me more fully, describing Bonsel's friend thus.

"He is a tall man, nearly as tall as I am, but older and not so broad. He is of that type of China-

man — h I chiefly detest and despise, and you have — well to trust him in nothing. To Mr. Bonse. . can understand he is everything that is good ; but why? Because his cold calculating love of gain makes him so.

"The G — — — nt for him no doubt in the req — — — government. Such a thing is by — — — able. You told me that theirs dship founded upon business i — — — set: these relations are probably end; but it is the Chinaman ost, since his govern-
ment rely up — — — to him to act.

"I knew, immediately I saw him, something of the true nature of the man. I read the Chinese character rapidly, for I have studied to do so from my early youth. And with Shan-min-yuen, the chief characteristics are these—avarice and greed above all ; cold, bloodless cruelty inherent in his thoughts, and the firmness of an unbending and evil will."

"And you learned absolutely nothing concerning, or in any way bearing upon, the fate of William Norris ? " I asked anxiously.

"Nothing. I learned much regarding Shan-min-yuen ; for, when my audience was at an end, one of his oldest servants was by chance deputed to conduct me to the gate, and I bribed him so that I might, if possible, have something more definite to put before you than my own casual opinion

of his master, but I learned nothing to aid your search."

"And what did the servant tell you?" I inquired.

"Perhaps little in your estimation, but sufficient at least, to clear up the relations between Bonsel and Shan-min-yuen, which are, so far as I could ascertain, such as I have already conjectured. You must understand that my statement may not be accurate, as I have pieced together what I heard with this result.

"I will tell you a little of the past of Shan-min-yuen. In the first place, he quarrelled with his father a number of years ago ; his father was then a wealthy man, but old, and he died shortly, leaving his fortune not to Shan-min-yuen, his disinherited son, but as charity to the priests of the Temple of Confucius.

"Instead of endeavouring to save his fortune, to do which would have been impossible, Shan-min-yuen was wise enough to realise his powerlessness, and, casting in his lot with poverty, he treated with a good grace the magnificent offering of his parent to the temple. By this means, he succeeded in himself taking, as it were, the place of donor.

"A very natural result, as you cannot but see.

"On this account, that is because of the donation of his father, to which (being unable to act otherwise) he agreed, he was gifted with some holy attribute by the priests ; and his position in

the city Pekin is now a powerful one, for the double reason of his influence at court, in the place he half inherited and half gained by his own efforts, and from the power invested in him by the holy men. They revere him in a measure as benefactor and as father of a temple upon the aid of whose priests he ma, our—all in reality because of his

"But," I int is so strange and interesting a sto not understand how such informatic hrough the bribery of a servant."

He smiled, at

"You forget that the mandarin's servants are not of the common herd of men. Do you think one of the lower class could find admittance into the Imperial City? Scarcely!"

"This servant whom I bribed is a man of rare intelligence. I bribed him; he told me all he knew.

"It is known by the powers that Shan-min-yuen is the father of the Confucian priests, and from this he has gained rank and, I fancy, wealth."

"But what has this to do with Bonsel?" I asked.

"I am coming to that. Before the death of his father, and immediately succeeding the quarrel, Shan-min-yuen went, so I believe, to Tientsin. Here he made the German's acquaintance.

"On his return to court, upon his father's death, he was thus in a position to transact business with

his German friend. He, being a holy man, you understand, is for that reason (and the other, that he ratified his father's action, thus, to all appearance, sacrificing everything for his religion) looked upon as the last who would work for gain. Thus it is that many things are entrusted to him, and his avarice is gratified not a little by the accumulation of a fortune which, I suspect, will already have surpassed all that he lost by reason of his father's gift!" :

"Why did not Bonsel tell us of this?"

"Because," answered Chin-chin-wa, "probably he has not heard what is the true position of his business friend. He receives his orders, is not that sufficient? Further, you must remember that I am Chinese; otherwise there would have been much unexplained.

"I took this servant with me to an eating-house, and there we sat for more than an hour; I questioning him upon many points, and he answering. It was thus that my information was pieced together; not so easily gathered, I can assure you, as related by me.

"For instance, much is pure conjecture upon my part. I read the man's character as avaricious. I know of Bonsel's business relations with him. I know that this trade arises from the fact that the man blessed as the benefactor and father of the priesthood is trusted to work without profit, as his very servant believes him to do, and that he gains

wealth in the trust reposed in him I conclude.
He fore saw upon his father's death how he was to
make gain from what seemed to be a loss.

"The keenly calculating nature of this man saw
the path clearly laid out before him. Making
religion a stepping stone and accepting the
inevitable, he so worked as you now, taking this
to gain nature as Chinese, is there not
more difficult life than you could
have imagined? I might say, I have clearly seen
clearly before me."

I was interested in this tale, interesting and
clearly put as it had been, struck me as being the
truth. It was too strange to be otherwise; and
I wondered at the clear-seeing mind of Chin-
chin-wa, which had gone back to fathom a Chinese
motive, and to clear up what was doubtful until the
whole lay patent.

For my part, I should have passed on without
going beneath the ground to discover avarice as
the commencement of all, nor would I have traced
its growth, as Chin-chin-wa had done, from the seed
to the full-blown flower; I should not have pene-
trated motives so deep.

Chin-chin-wa, with true knowledge of the Chinese,
attributed such to Shan-min-yuen's earlier life.

"You see that I speak true, do you not?"

"Yes," was my reply.

"And you understand now that this is not the
man to trust with the secret of your mission?"

CHIN-CHIN-WA AND SHAN-MIN-YUEN. 203

"I believe," I replied, "that though in some small particulars you may be wrong in judging Shan-min-yuen, still your conception of his motives and life is right as a whole ; for, as you put it to me, I can understand that the subtlety that you bring before me is consistent in every way with Chinese thought and life."

XIII.

COR

LEAVE PEKIN.

ON the day
chin-wa had
incident of so,

t upon which Chin-
the Imperial City, an
occurred.

We had been engaged during the forenoon in a repetition of that search which, aimless, in a measure, and futile as we half expected it to be, was still our only course, when the hour for our mid-day meal drew near. According to our custom, we sought a Chinese eating-house, and were shortly seated at a table on the upper or second floor, awaiting the viands ordered by Chin-chin-wa.

The restaurant was to me a new one, as I had not seen much of this part of Pekin, and Chin-chin-wa informed me that there was not a better nor a more costly eating-house in the capital, and that we might shortly expect the arrival of a number of mandarins, who made it a custom to frequent the house.

I had grown by now, so used to the Chinese food, as to eat some of their dishes with relish,



A tall man, in rich dress, suddenly entered.—*p. 206,*

and though the use of the chopsticks was not yet quite familiar to me, I generally succeeded in getting through the meal without much trouble. To-day I perceived that the dishes were larger, and apparently better cooked, than those we had been accustomed to inquire

Chin-chin-wa knew what dishes to order for me; for I was not fond of birds' fins—two of the most expensive obtained—and could not bear to look upon sundry other viands, such as horseflesh, or young dogs or rats, which were frequently placed before us in various houses.

I was busy accordingly with some chicken, eating occasionally from my bowl of boiled rice and greens, when Chin-chin-wa drew my attention to the entry, at the farther end of the room, of two mandarin's servants, sent, no doubt, to order the meal of the great man who followed.

Chin-chin-wa and I were seated facing one another, my left side and his right being nearest to the door, and, answering his direction, I had but glanced towards the mandarin's servants, when a tall man, in rich dress, suddenly entered, and, approaching, seated himself at the second table from that at which we sat.

Though he had not yet cast his eye upon us, I was struck by his appearance and by the hardness of his Chinese features.

Chin-chin-wa's foot pressed mine. Almost at the same time the mandarin looked toward us.

Chin-chin-wa rose and made an obeisance. The mandarin acknowledged the salute. I was about to speak as Chin-chin-wa resumed his seat, but he interrupted me at the first word, speaking rapidly in Chinese.

The mandarin's cold piercing eye had fixed itself upon me, and I understood immediately what Chin-chin-wa desired.

I turned towards him, and appeared to listen to his speech, for it was evident he did not wish me to use the English tongue. Then I drew my chopsticks slowly through my lips, as I had seen the Chinese do at the conclusion of a meal, for I was by no means desirous to continue eating, having gathered that I had some part to act.

Chin-chin-wa rose, as though he too had concluded his meal.

But during the time in which I had sat without speaking, endeavouring to simulate comprehension of what Chin-chin-wa was narrating to me in Chinese, I had known that the mandarin's glance was still fixed inquiringly upon my Chinese dress and my head of European hair.

Walking as I had learned to do somewhat in the manner of the Chinese, to which, indeed, the shoes I wore greatly conduced, I followed Chin-chin-wa. As we passed the mandarin, Chin-chin-wa made a second obeisance; I did the same.

We said together from the room, and a sense of relief, as of some great danger escaped from, came over me as we reached the street.

"That man," said Chin-chin-wa, "is Shan-min-yuen."

The end It was true, looked up strange one—so unusual sought to be his scrutiny, immediate danger.

a foreboding of ill. men might only have y, as another of that m Chin-chin-wa was vn nation that they ut I had not escaped though we had avoided some trouble in store;

for the mandarin would not rest, I feared, without explanation of my presence in the eating-house as a Chinaman in company with Chin-chin-wa. It was indeed, possible, that my dress had served in leading to the misconception that I too was merely striving to become Chinese; but danger seemed to be about us, notwithstanding that we assured ourselves that the incident was of no moment.

"I was anxious," said Chin-chin-wa to me in discussing the matter, "as far as possible to put you, in the mandarin's eyes, on a footing with myself. My speaking to you in Chinese would heighten this impression and diminish, to a small extent, the fact which your hair and features of course betrayed, that you were not Chinese."

But the feeling of ill to come shadowed me,

notwithstanding, and, from the hour of the encounter, I waited expectantly for the evil which something within me foretold.

Chin-chin-wa was of opinion that my fears were groundless, for he could not see how misfortune could arise from the meeting, although he felt the utmost distrust of Shan-min-yuen. And, indeed, I could not explain either to him or to myself my forebodings, for they seemed to be without cause.

Shan-min-yuen could know nothing of the object of my visit to Pekin, and whether he did or did not believe that my design was merely to follow Chin-chin-wa in joining the Chinese race, could, therefore, matter little, nor was it very probable that Shan-min-yuen would chance to mention the incident of our meeting to the man unknown, to whom we ascribed Norris's detention in the Palace grounds. Neither was it certain that he even knew our foe. So said Chin-chin-wa.

We now determined that we should endeavour to seek Norris in the Imperial grounds; for we had searched alike through the low places in Pekin and in the houses of the rich, and we had failed to discover by this means any trace of the missing man.

Wherever there was a courtyard we had sought for admission and generally obtained it, and where we had failed to gain admission we had at least satisfied ourselves that there was nothing to hide. And, in addition, as I have already said, we had

sought in low and evil places, on the chance that Norris might be there confined. So, although there still remained miles of Pekin to search, and vast acres of ground covered by the temples and by the Legations, it seemed to us that we sought in vain at that in the Imperial City alone imprisoned.

In this consciousness of our past, the knowledge of the Imperial City, which caused a certain *attraction*, ... the great difficulties to be overcome in undertaking a search within its sacred grounds.

We spent the day following upon our encounter with Shan-min-yuen, in a curious way, aiming chiefly at a vast system of bribery to be so continued that the gate-keepers should gradually be corrupted, and that from them the bribery should pass on to those beyond, so that by the outlay of vast sums in a careful manner the entire Imperial City should lie open to us at a future time.

Those who know aught of the insuperable difficulty of gaining, by money expenditure, an entrance, fraught with danger, into the Park alone—an entrance never extended further than a distance easily and rapidly paced—will understand how great was the task which we had undertaken.

and how far removed the possibility of eventual success.

We spent hours with men whom Chin-chin-wa found to be in some way connected with the outer gates, taking them to inns in the city, and there sitting with them and gradually corrupting them with bribes.

Thus the day passed, and at last, worn out and fatigued, we set out to return to our home, to find, when we reached it, that our time had been uselessly spent, that this day was not to be as we had intended, the first of many such; for my foreboding of ill was already fulfilled, and the evil was awaiting us when we returned to our home.

The blow came in the shape of a mission from the court—to the exile Chin-chin-wa.

One of the servants of Shan-min-yuen must have previously tracked us home, for there were three men of apparent rank awaiting our return, who bowed low as we entered the door, but who carried, none the less, the decree which Chin-chin-wa read, apparently unmoved by the perusal, and to which he answered, so it seemed to me, in a single word, as the men bowed a second time and moved away.

"An embassy from the court," he said to me as they left.

"What is it?" I inquired anxiously; for I saw that it was ill, not good.

"This is what it says," said Chin-chin-wa, speaking bitterly. "This is the decree:—

"WITHIN TWO DAYS, THE PARDONED EXILE,
CHIN-CHIN-WA, IS COMMANDED TO LEAVE PEKIN
FOR EVER. ——————
THE SENTENCE
ON THE THIRD DAY,
ANY HAND.'"

"And wha
realising wha

"I answered

"Who sig

"Shan-min-yuen
attached. I am an exile once more. I see it all!" his voice found a terrible bitterness in the words; "I see it all, and if I meet you, Shan-min-yuen, before that time, you and I will test who wins; and if I leave Pekin before I meet you face to face, I shall haunt the walls until at some time you pass, as you must, beyond them, and then you have to deal with me."

I felt, as he spoke, that this was an undying enmity, and I prayed from my soul for a moment that he might not meet Shan-min-yuen within the time given him; for then both he and I and William Norris would be assuredly lost.

"Is there no appeal?" I asked at length.

"None," was his reply. "This is how it has been. He, who has influence, has striven to cancel the pardon given to me and witnessed by his own hand; notwithstanding his great power, he

y?" I asked, not yet
eant for me.
I obey.'"

Imperial seal is there

has failed to do this thing. But he has been partly gratified ; for, although he could show no reason why I should be banished to Formosa a second time, save the trifling one that I consorted with you, they have yielded to him in part, and at his instigation determined to banish me from Pekin. Outside of Pekin I am, as I have been since I met you, still protected by the Supreme Power ; inside Pekin, this mandarin will now hunt me out and kill me by the number of his men."

There was the calm of desperation in his words —a cold, unerring calm, such as he had contracted from the Chinese. Yes, to Shan-min-yuen Chin-chin-wa had become a dangerous man.

I wondered inwardly if the day of reckoning would ever come. And then my thoughts returned to my own position and to my search. All was ruined : the edifice of my hopes had tottered, indeed, for days ; now the whole lay as a mass of crumbled dust beneath my feet.

"And William Norris," I said, half speaking to myself, "what of him?"

"You are right," said Chin-chin-wa. "There is a greater thing than my revenge—that can wait ; but William Norris must be found."

I looked at him curiously. Would this man never admit despair? In the face of such a crushing blow, was his spirit still undaunted?

"I wish to be alone," he said ; "there is much to think upon. I shall come to you within an hour."

I him at once, merely pressing his strong hand, as I passed him, in token of my sympathy; and then I, too, was alone, to torture myself with thoughts of the present and fears of what was to come.

Why was Chin-chin-wa banished from Pekin? Why had the mandarin, who had always lived a hatred for him, now resolved to use his influence to have him banished? Did he fear that he could not bear the punishment which he could inflict upon him? Or could he? Or could he have been jealous of his servant? That might be the reason. That might be the misfortune which had fallen upon me. That might be the reason why I had been banished from Pekin.

meeting in the eating-house. It was connected with that; I felt sure of it. And he, the mandarin, had banished Chin-chin-wa, the old exile, having power against him on account of his former captivity; whilst against me he could have no grudge, for none could say I had done a wrong in seeking to become Chinese. Was this why I still remained unnoticed, whilst Chin-chin-wa was banished? It would have been a curious coincidence indeed had I been banished by the man to whom I might have gone as a guest. As it was, Chin-chin-wa alone suffered, and suffered through being with me, for some cause which might have arisen from the innate evil of Shang-min-yuen's mind, or from suspicions suggested to him that we were spies in the Chinese land.

As to what was now to come, I could see no hope.

What could I do in Pekin alone?—for alone I should be assuredly, since Chin-chin-wa left me in two days. It was true that he might live outside the walls in constant communication with me by courier; but, without his assistance, and with no knowledge of the language, what would come of me; what of Norris?

Alas! the swallow bore its message, then, in vain after all!

I passed into a state of dull despair, looking forward to days to come, in which I should continue to live a solitary, useless life in Pekin, hoping, always hoping, that my time might come, and yet waiting for years in vain.

And the shadow of Shan-min-yuen's enmity for Chin-chin-wa or for me might descend in some terrible and unforeseen way.

Who was his enemy—Chin-chin-wa or I?

XIV.

1

FOUND.

NOTWITHSTA-

"There is a
seemed to me

standstill, and that he was dwelling entirely upon his own misfortune during these leaden-footed hours.

in-chin-wa had said, "I have my revenge," it come to a complete

There was now, indeed, no chance of our ever entering the Imperial City by bribes, for this would have taken weeks to accomplish; but that despair should have seized upon Chin-chin-wa, as I fancied it had done, I could with difficulty bring myself to believe. How far did I misjudge him in the conception of such a thought!

Upon the morning succeeding the reception of the decree he asked me, in an absent way, for the paper brought to me by the swallow.

I gave it to him, but I did not think that he was then in a condition of mind to attempt to penetrate the mystery—to fill that gap which was still as it had been months ago.

To my surprise he had said but little to me since the conversation which had immediately ensued upon reading the message of the court.

I felt that his grief was such as I could not believe—that I must leave him to his own thoughts, as he desired to be left; for the misfortune seemed to have changed him in a way that I could not understand.

And this was the reason, as I soon discovered.

His every effort was now turned to the determination to discover and save William Norris before the expiration of the time appointed; and the result of this determination, and the working of his mind, was shortly to be disclosed.

For myself I knew not what to do, feeling that I could not upbraid Chin-chin-wa for a lack of interest in our quest, for I could understand how terrible to bear must have been the decree of exile passed upon him again. True, it was not what it had been: it was merely that he was now forbidden the city of Pekin; but that was sufficient to prove that the exile was, after all, but partly pardoned, and more than enough to cut him to his heart.

Chin-chin-wa having retired to his chamber, and not liking to disturb him, I cast about in my own mind what was fittest for me to do.

That Chin-chin-wa's time was already drawing to an end was obvious. I fully understood, too, that with his departure from Pekin I was left as a

useless agent, and I felt that movement alone (even to be merely walking in the streets), would satisfy in a small degree my craving for action. That I should not disturb Chin-chin-wa I determined, because I felt that in good time he would come to me, and I re-~~membered~~ what I believed to be his grief. Thus it came about that I was upon venturing forth alone for an hour, tending to return for Chin-chin-wa, upon him then, whatever might be

I made signs to the dealer that my return was imminent; and then, not knowing otherwise, I left the house, and set out walking briskly, it little mattered where, along the dust-covered roads. In time—a considerable time it must have been, for I had wandered on without looking at my watch—I came to a strange part of the town, near to one of the gates, a spot where I had not been before, and where something of a fair was being held in narrow, paved streets and arcades.

I was interested in the various articles for sale, and thus strolled onwards, partly forgetting my misfortunes in the novelty of the surroundings. Then suddenly it occurred to me to retrace my steps. I commenced to do so, with the immediate result that I strayed from my way, and the conviction became gradually forced upon me that I had lost myself in the great city of Pekin.

I think that few more unhappy moments have

fallen to my lot. Blaming myself bitterly, I grew more uncomfortable as I proceeded. Every direction seemed to be the wrong one, and I speedily realised that I was hopelessly lost. Many hours passed, whilst I was wandering to and fro, without any idea as to where I was, but still striving to reach my home again by prolonged perseverance.

If a man be lost in Pekin he may realise its vastness. I knew nothing of the part of the city in which I found myself. Nor do I know to this day in which portion of the city lay that curious old fair or bazaar which first led me astray.

Time moved on, and the sun sank, and still I wandered on.

As I was about to turn upon my steps, for perhaps the hundredth time, I saw a little shop which I recognised as having once passed previously; and from that fortunate incident I succeeded in finding my way to the Marble Bridge, and thence, without much trouble, though the distance was a long one, back again to my Chinese home. It was almost dark when I arrived there, in a terrible state of dust and discomfort; and glad indeed was I, to know that my poor tired feet, cramped as they were in Chinese shoes, had succeeded in bearing me home at last.

When I entered the courtyard, I found that Chin-chin-wa was awaiting me in a very perturbed and anxious state of mind.

"You wandered, I suppose," he said with a touch

of acidity in his tone ; "and did so at an hour when every moment is of value to us. Do you recognise the truth that to-morrow by noon I shall be with you no longer ?"

"To-morrow," I answered, taken aback by the words ; "it is not to-morrow, but the succeeding day that you had two days, had you not ?"

" You are wrong. To days, indeed, but on the third day leave before noon : to-morrow, the day on which they call as the first; to-day is the second; and to-morrow, the third, I am an exile from Pekin by noon."

" And," I replied, stung to the quick at the thought of the hours wasted alike by Chin-chin-wa and by myself, " I looked upon this as the first day; for the word was given late in the day, and yesterday cannot have been considered as a day."

" You forget," answered Chin-chin-wa, " this paper bears a date."

" And how long have you known that your time was so short ?"

" Since yesterday, when I received the paper. It did not strike me that you could have misconceived its meaning."

" And knowing that," I said, " you still let the morning hours pass until I went out to-day, leaving you to your thoughts. I should not have left you

thus had I understood. Now, indeed, there is no hope."

"You are wrong," he answered. "Much valuable time has been lost—not all. An hour ago, waiting for your return, not venturing forth lest I should miss you—for you went without my knowledge this morning, and I knew not where—all seemed to me to be lost: now there is still a chance."

"A chance, where?"

"You have returned; and we have the morning hours—several hours before noon to-morrow. During these hours it may yet be done."

I looked at his face, which was set and resolute, and it flashed across me that my absence had caused him a deeper pain than I could know.

"What do you mean?" I asked. "There can be no hope now."

"There *is* hope," he answered. "I believe that I have found the man we seek."

I could not believe my senses. My hopes had reached the lowest ebb. Chin-chin-wa was right: I had done wrong. A day wasted in the city, as it had come to be wasted by me at such a time—the last day that he and I should have spent together—it was too terrible to be true. And yet by an evil mischance which had led me astray it had been so; and still, in spite of all, Chin-chin-wa said,

"There is hope. I believe that I have found the man we seek."

"I do not understand," I answered wearily.
"There can be no hope."

"Listen to me," said Chin-chin-wa; "I will tell you all. I have found William Norris; for I have heard his cries. He is confined in the Temple of Confucius."

"It can
"See," I
I have
knife. 'T
swallow's
William N
know the truth.

ssible."
e is the paper filled up.
n red ink, with a sharp
cking now: there is the
s given to the bird by
derfully simple when we

I looked at the paper.

It seemed to have been filled as by a miracle, the whole fitted so exactly; for Chin-chin-wa, with Chinese skill of hand, had written the missing part exactly as the rest, and the completed whole read thus:

"In God's name rescue me;
Lose no time. I am imprisoned
In the Temple of Confucius, in
Pekin, by the Chinese. Tenth Swallow.
William Norris, September, 18—
May God help me!"

"And now," continued Chin-chin-wa, as I continued to gaze upon the paper, "we are near the end. Either we save William Norris, or we ourselves perish; for I, at least, in face of the order of



"See, there is the paper filled up."—p. 222.

the court which banishes me from Pekin, refuse to leave the city unless that man goes with me when I go."

"There is an old stone of considerable size standing half upright in the road which passes by the Temple of Confucius. It was there—within two feet from this stone—that I left Fa-to-man lying in the dust.

My dream
never, dur-
ing all my
vision in
I thought I
with the bl-
Then sud-
it seemed to
the past, and I com-
as it may seem, I have
years gone by, seen this
back to that hour, and
again as he lay there,
ningling with the dust.
that I was alone—that
rds; since I recollect
to wonder why I had
come to stand upon this spot so long after, and
why I stood waiting there now; and the question
troubled me, so that I lost sight of the well-
remembered scene, and suddenly awoke.

"Although I slept afterwards, the impression of
the dream remained with me; and in the early
dawn, whilst I lay awake pondering upon its mean-
ing, a connection flashed across me.

"Shan-min-yuen is the benefactor of the temple
—the father of the priesthood!

"These thoughts, though in a measure half-born
only, in that I still denied them belief, yet troubled
me greatly, and led me to ask you for this paper.

"You had scarcely given it me when I perceived
that I had found the truth.

"The Temple of Confucius!—it filled the space
exactly.

"I did not hurry to put my discovery before you as soon as made, because I wished to work out every detail before I gave you the facts. Thus it was that, whilst I sat dreaming in solitude of scenes which I caused to pass before my mental eye, you went out alone, and when I sought you but half an hour later I sought you in vain. I waited some time for your return; and as you did not come within an hour, I could bear the suspense no longer. William Norris was a prisoner in the Temple of Confucius. I was certain of it, and I determined at once to set out.

"It is a long journey from here to the temple. I went on foot, and at length reached it.

"And now that I had done so I recognised my powerlessness, for I had, as yet, no plan of action, and knew no means by which I could reach the prisoner. In this frame of mind I walked round the temple, examining the building, and endeavouring to hit upon some means of communication; for it was certain that the priests would on no account allow to me, a stranger, an entry into that part of the temple where their prisoner was confined.

"It was evident to me that Norris must have been permitted in the old time, when he caught the swallow which brought its message to you, a certain degree of liberty within the walls; and, if still alive, his position in this respect might be unaltered, and flight by means of ropes thrown

from outside be possible, were we able to communicate with him. I was thus cogitating, when suddenly I heard a shriek from within—a shriek as of a man in torture ; and I knew instantly that it was a European, and not a Chinese voice, for the Chinese cannot cry in their pain loudly, nor as a European cries.

“It was an Englishman’s cry—the voice of William Norris !

“From this I knew that all hope of communication from outside, or of saving him in that way, was taken away ; for, from the cry, he was then, so I judged, under torture, and therefore his liberty within the walls is a thing of the past.

“I thrust back the feelings that rushed upon me when I heard the shriek, for now out of all my life had come that time when my Chinese nature must be called upon, when for another’s sake my feelings must be mastered ; for in moments of the most intense excitement the heart must be stilled if circumstance is to be overcome.

“It was clear that haste must be avoided, even at the risk of Norris’s life.”

“And what then ?” I cried. “ You did not leave him at their mercy ?”

“He is still in the Temple of Confucius. I did, indeed, strive to reach him ; but a portion of the temple—so they told me, and as I had expected—was sacred ground, and thus keeping a barred door, nay many for aught I know—between me and him, the

priests protected their right to retain William Norris in holy ground. As I still spoke to them, not mentioning that I had heard a cry, or knew aught of their captive, I continued to question within myself what means I might employ to enter what they called the more sacred parts, and I remembered that Shan-min-yuen's name would have an influence, and was about to speak that name, when suddenly it occurred to me that I had a greater thing—my pardon, signed by him and by the Supreme Power, and I drew this forth. But caution whispered to me at the last moment, 'Wait, and return with your English friend; you will need his aid, and you cannot desert him.'

"I left the temple, and returned hither at a rapid pace. You were still absent.

"Here is my pardon. It reads thus, as I have told you:

'PERMIT AND GIVE HONOUR
TO CHIN-CHIN-WA.'

"And it is signed by the father of the Confucian priesthood, Shan-min-yuen—by the man, that is to say, whose interest it is to confine William Norris in the Temple of Confucius, with its priests for guardians.

"Thus reads my pardon—to the outside world as relating only to my freedom from exile; but, if presented to the priests, whose world is their temple, it will bear another meaning.

" And the possession of this name attached to these words, ' Permit and give honour to,' will, to my belief, give me entry and freedom to act as Shan-min-yuen himself might act in the most sacred precincts of the Confucian temple.

" To do this
to do what
Norris free
thereafter in
the way in which I intend
-I shall bring William
temple, but immediately
our only chance.

" Do this
they were
pass.
turn I could not, though
ness you caused me to

" To have secured Norris would have been to leave you, for I did not know what had become of you; so I waited. It is now too late to act to-day, but to-morrow there is still time."

I was silent for a long time when he ceased to speak.

" Is all clear to you ? " he asked at length. " You see now, do you not, that there is still hope ? "

" Yes," was my reply ; " but a question or two I would still put to you."

" Proceed," was the laconic reply.

" Are you certain that there is no mistake ; sure that Norris is confined in this temple ? We have this paper. The words fit exactly ; but are you certain that the man is still alive ? "

" I am sure of this—that he was within the temple, and that I heard his voice but a few hours ago. But, even whilst we speak, he may be expir-

ing under the torture to which, his cry tells me, he was then subjected."

"Is there nothing to be done to-night?" I asked despairingly.

"Nothing," he replied solemnly; then, in a little, he continued, "but he has lived all these days that are past—for nearly a year now, shall we say; let us hope that we are yet in time. This speaks for him, does it not?—I am banished. Why should I be banished, if to kill William Norris effects the object in view; there is some reason, some cause, why he must not die, else why should he have been allowed to live till now?"

I did not answer, for in my heart of hearts there was nothing but despair; ay, despair and a wild longing that the past might come again—that those hours, when I had strayed as lost through the dust-laden streets might be given back to me, and it was now but vain to conceive the desire.

So much time lost, did it mean the loss of all?

Night had fallen upon us and drawn forth a mantle silvery with stars, and I stood before Chin-chin-wa in the courtyard, with bowed head, feeling that if it were so, I alone was answerable for what had been.

R XV.

CHIN-C

MERS THE TEMPLE.

DURING the long hours of clearly the story which he had pieced together.

of us slept ; and in the Chin-chin-wa gave me more

The intricacies of the puzzle were not, however, entirely cleared away.

For what reason Shan-min-yuen had so suddenly decided upon his banishment Chin-chin-wa was at a loss to say ; for a few days more or less could have been of little account, unless, indeed, there were some cause for immediate alarm. The meeting in the eating-house was clearly insufficient to determine him upon taking such immediate and summary action. One suggestion occurred to us : had Bonsel innocently written of our visit and given the first shadow of suspicion to the Chinaman's mind ?

Otherwise all was clear ; and, indeed, the old saying, that truth is strangest of all, struck me forcibly, as I looked back upon the working of fate.

Shan-min-yuen was at the root of all. It was

he who, as the father of the temple, had placed Norris there as his captive ; and there, whether in hope of a ransom or because he was afraid to kill the Englishman, he kept him—in a prison safer than which there was none.

Chin-chin-wa alone possessed a key to unlock its most sacred recess ; for it was plain that, if Norris was alive, we might save him still, through the wording of the exile's pardon, which said, "Permit and give honour," an order which, in another sense from that intended, the temple would obey. But danger was on all sides ; for Chin-chin-wa became a doomed man after noon on the morrow, and the distance from our dwelling to the temple, and again from the temple to the Tungchow Gate,* would take hours to traverse.

Chin-chin-wa had ordered palanquins to convey us in state to the Confucian temple, in order to give the air at once of reality and of high degree to the visit, which we purposed making at the earliest hour on the morrow at which it would be advisable to approach the priests. All our plans were laid. Our host, the old keeper of the curio-store, was to befriend us in the hour of need. He was to meet us outside the city gate, so Chin-chin-wa arranged, with our ponies ready for the road. And the great question now was this : given that all went well—given that William Norris still lived, and

* Tunchow Gate—colloquially thus referred to.

that we could save him—was it possible to reach the gate thereafter before the noonday hour?

To go to the priests at daybreak would have created suspicion. Chin-chin-wa knew something of the temple rites, and the hour fixed upon for our visit was in

th these.

I ponde
discovered.
truth and co
to go to Shar
only possibil
as Chin-chin-

what Chin-chin-wa had
, in possession of the
should have pressed me
seemed incredible. The
Bonsel had been unaware,
l, of even the remotest
connection between his friend Shan-min-yuen and
the Temple of Confucius. Yet I could not but feel
that he had had small ground for urging upon me
that I should trust his Chinese friend. It was true

—at least I could not bring myself to suppose
otherwise, or to think badly of my late host in
any way—that Bonsel put his trust in the China-
man; but their connection could not have been of
so close a character, it now seemed, as to warrant
his endeavours to induce me to become the guest
of his friend. I could only think that Bonsel
had been a dupe; and that, whilst his business
relations might be satisfactory, those of a friendship,
merely professed upon Shan-min-yuen's side, had
been throughout rotten.

It was fortunate indeed that the Diceys had sent
me the assistance of Chin-chin-wa.

Had not Chin-chin-wa actually heard the cry

from the temple, I should have been inclined to argue even now against all that seemed to be so clearly the case; but I knew well that Chin-chin-wa was not one to be led astray by his own thoughts, and his very reticence upon the matter, until he had thoroughly convinced himself, was of itself reassuring.

I fell a-musing upon the awful fate of William Norris, and to wondering how it had come about that he had given to' the swallow the message which had reached me months before; and a certain terror descended upon me as I wildly conjectured the tortures which he might even now be undergoing whilst we, who had found him and were longing to rescue him, were obliged to wait for the tardy approach of day. My musings were of too numerous a character to be decisive or of value. If I thought of Bonsel, and of his relations to the traitor, my ideas wandered away to the temple where Norris lay, and again back to the agony of remorse for the wasted hours gone by—remorse that I could not banish, strive as I might.

And thus in a strange jumble of thought I waited with Chin-chin-wa (seldom speaking, as the hours went by), merely longing with a great unquenchable desire for the daylight to come.

Chance had in the end befriended us—alas! perhaps too late, since but a few hours were now left us during which Chin-chin-wa might act with me, for it was by Chin-chin-wa's pardon alone that Norris *might* be saved!

Thus thinking, an idea occurred to me. Supposing that Chin-chin-wa was able to effect nothing, he might still assist me by reason of his pardon.

I could do it if Chin-chin-wa could not, that is to say, I might, if need arose, succeed in gaining admittance to the prison of the Chinese self by impersonating Chin-chin-wa.

Chin-chin-wa
terminate the
return to Tie
fetched Bonsel
in complicity
German friend.

l the morrow fail to
t he should at once
e in Pekin, whilst he
e nor I could believe
n-min-yuen and his

Having placed before Bonsel the true state of the case, it was his intention to challenge the friendship of which Bonsel had boasted, and of which we had nearly become the victims, and to say to him, "It lies with you to prove to us your good faith. The detention of William Norris now seriously affects your honour, and you must bring about his escape. How will you do this? Will you go stealthily to your Chinese friend, and pit your cunning against his, whilst we assist you from afar off; or will you prove your reliance upon your Chinese friendship and your belief in Shan-min-yuen, and go to him to demand the release of his prisoner, with the certainty that he will not refuse?"

I had objected to this plan because, as I had said, Bonsel would from the first have refused to

believe in that which was only substantiated by a weak chain of evidence ; for, as yet, we had truly no actual proof against Shan-min-yuen. " How then," I said, " will you succeed in bringing Bonsel from Tientsin and, having accomplished this, how will you prevail upon him to believe one word of slander against his friend, or to act in either of the ways you propose ? "

And Chin-chin-wa had answered me—

" I shall easily induce him to leave Tientsin. I shall then disclose the truth. And," he added, with a dark look, " it has come to this—that I shall forfeit Bonsel's life sooner than lose William Norris. Bonsel has brought it upon himself, and I shall tell him that, whatever course he may elect to follow, I, Chin-chin-wa, hold his life as guarantee for the freedom of that of Norris, and that so surely as Norris dies he too will die by my hand."

To me these measures appeared unjustifiable, since we had both agreed that the German was innocent of the merest suspicion of the actions of his Chinese friend.

This was the design which occurred to me.

Upon leaving Pekin on the morrow, Chin-chin-wa should give me his pardon, if nothing had been effected meantime, thus facing, himself, the danger of death if the exile's mark were known of or seen. I should then go to the temple with the pardon, and use its power as though I myself were

Chin-chin-wa. The danger was as great for each ; I knew that he would be willing to face it more readily, if possible, than I. To him it might mean an exile's death. I seemed to see, in my own mind, his great strength beaten down by that of a hundred fiends, and the man dying with the unconquered light still undimmed upon his face.

Another form of death might await me—the death consequent upon the discovery of treachery—death at the hands of the priests or at the command of Shau-min-yuen ; or, indeed, it might be that I too should be immured side by side with Norris within the temple grounds.

I laid my suggestions before Chin-china-wa. He was not ready to consider them as yet, however, because it was our intention to go to the temple before noon on the morrow ; and it was his firm determination to use his pardon himself, for if danger was to be faced he would face it.

I could say nothing ; for he, possessing the pardon, had the prior right ; and, further, I could not speak Chinese.

His chance of success, granting that time allowed, was much greater than mine.

If on the morrow, he failed from any cause, then, he agreed, I might use the pardon in what way I saw fit ; and he, as an unpardoned exile, was willing to face his fellows. But, indeed, I perceived that there was but faint chance of my succeeding if the pardon had once been used unsuccessfully by Chin-

chin-wa himself ; and came finally to be of Chin-chin-wa's opinion, that he would be justified in then treating Bonsel as he proposed, holding Bonsel's life as hostage for that of Norris.

Even in this there was a flaw, for Bonsel was safe once he was in Pekin, since Chin-chin-wa was exiled from the city ; and this I pointed out. All the answer I received was this, " If the time comes, we shall see ; but to-morrow is not yet passed."

During the night I wrote a letter to the Diceys : to them, at least, I felt that I could write, for Chin-chin-wa agreed with me that they were true men. It was the first letter I had sent them from Pekin, and was to go by special courier (as Chin-chin-wa, through his friend, our host, had arranged for me), to the first steamer at Tientsin.

I wrote them to this effect :—That we had discovered Norris to be confined in the Confucian temple ; that Bonsel's Chinese friend was his captor ; that Chin-chin-wa had been banished from Pekin by this man ; and that the time had come when either our lives would be lost or William Norris saved. And I asked them to seek for us within three weeks, if they received no further news before the expiration of that time, and to reach us as they found best through the medium of Bonsel in Tientsin. I wrote as fully as I was able to do in the present condition of my mind ; and, manipulating the brush which the Chinese use as a pen, with difficulty completed a lengthy letter, to be dispatched early on the coming day.

The dawn crept upon us as we still sat waiting wearily. We had long ceased talking, but sleep on the dawn of such a day as lay before us was a thing beyond us.

The night of anxiety slowly passed away, and at last, almost worn out with the strain placed upon us by the palanquin, the hour came, when our Chinese bearers arrived to carry us forth through the streets.

Dressed in the fashion of the wealthy mandarin, a large spectacles, such as the mandarins wear over the eyes and screen the face from dust and from observation, we were borne amongst the carts and camels and mules that crowd the streets, towards our distant goal.

Now that the swallow's message was indeed bearing fruit, I was sad beyond description, as though a great leaden weight had been fastened to my heart to drag it into a depth of the deepest despair. How much this day must mean to us I fully realised ; yet my chief anxiety and fear was lest Norris, who, so far as we could judge, had yesterday been submitted to torture within the temple, had by now succumbed ; for my mind was strained to such a pitch by the intensity of the situation that I could hardly foresee any possibility of our ultimate success.

We two—Chin-chin-wa and I—seemed to have taken our stand against an overwhelming fate which cried out to us at every step, “ You shall not succeed—you shall not succeed ! ”

CHIN-CHIN-WA ENTERS THE TEMPLE. 241

How great were the chances against us! The pardon might fail in power. Norris might be dead. Shan-min-yuen might be even now with his victim, to meet Chin-chin-wa face to face.

And all had to be accomplished, every danger encountered and passed, before the hour of noon!

Is it wonderful that I despaired?

At last we reached the temple.

Chin-chin-wa was calm, as he ever was. I too was calm in a sense from another cause—the weight of the feelings which crushed me down.

Little was said. I gave my hand to Chin-chin-wa; for as he alone held the right to enter the temple, I did not know if I should ever clasp his hand again.

Our palanquins had been lowered upon the ground, and we stood thus for a moment gazing at the temple, which was shaded by its splendid trees.

Chin-chin-wa moved forwards, and I saw that he held his pardon in his left hand.

It came over me then with a great wave of emotion that he faced a danger beyond human control, and as I saw that he was leaving me, and realised that I might never look upon his face again, my agony burst from me.

"May God go with you!" I cried.

He turned and answered me, "I do not know your God," and then, without another word, went on, and I stood watching him as his tall figure

passed beneath the trees until he reached the first of the temple halls.

I cannot say for how long a time I remained thus awaiting his return ; perhaps too deeply filled with an agonized excitement and longing to note that many minutes passed, heaping themselves side by side in the barns of forgotten time.

A loud cry came of a sudden from somewhere within.

I think my senses, in the awful anxiety, half forsook me, for I waited dumbly to know the meaning of the cry, straining my ears in expectancy of catching a repetition, but no repetition came.

A crowd had gathered round me—a crowd of fruit and drink sellers, and carters and lepers and vagabonds, looking perhaps upon my costly dress, or perhaps noticing my European face ; but I scarcely knew that I was the object of observation.

Had Chin-chin-wa met with Shan-min-yuen within the walls ?

A rush of sudden madness overcame me ; Chin-chin-wa was in danger, and William Norris perhaps dead. I too would force an entrance into the temple, and even violate its sanctity, in order to share with them their fate.

With these feelings urging me to action, I was on the point of committing some rash act, and had indeed made two rapid steps towards the temple gates, when a counter-impulse caused me abruptly to stop.

Chin-chin-wa had appeared at the entrance to the temple building! With three priests on either side, and others following behind, he came towards me, and towards freedom, step by step over the shadows of the trees upon the stone-paved path.

As he came nearer I saw that he carried something heavy in his arms, though with his great strength he walked erect as always. The moments beat into my brain as he advanced, until he with the priests reached the gate, and there he came forth uninjured with his burden in his arms.

Then I realised that it was a man's attenuated form that he bore, for I saw the bare feet, one of which was covered with blood, and the coarse Chinese dress he wore, and I looked upon his lifeless face which hung back over Chin-chin-wa's arm.

It was pale and drawn as with a long agony, and the head was half shaved.

"My God!" I half gasped, "is this then William Norris?"

The crowd surged around us, and Chin-chin-wa answered me wildly,

"I do not know."

R XVI.

PRIE

NDERMINE A SOUL.

WHEN
it was winter

e Temple of Confucius
was clad in the heavy
padded garments such as the Chinese wear in the
north as a protection against the cold, and with furs
in addition, for the Pekin winter is severe indeed.

He resembled a wild beast, moving to and fro
in confinement, when we parted with him. We
return to him some months later, when the terrible
effects of the agony caused by the dropping of
the molten lead upon his skin had begun to wear
away.

Slowly indeed did Norris come to know that his
senses were still preserved to him, that he had
passed through the ordeal, that he had suffered
the priestly rite of the molten lead and had still
survived.

The cold, assisting the man's natural strength,
gradually effected his return to perfect sanity ; but
Norris's senses awoke to life again—as sometimes
occurs with the human brain—with a complete

forgetfulness of the agony through which he had passed.

Up to a certain point his recollection served him ; beyond that there was a blank which he set down to a species of delirium, a delirium which he fancied had its commencement with the entry long ago of the priests and the strange Chinaman to the temple building, where Norris had then lain as a captive chained by the ankle to the ground.

Thus, to his mind, he had never been shaved ; for he could not recall what had succeeded to the first entry of the barber whom he did not then, and did not now, recognise as such.

During the weeks that had gone by his captors had left him to himself ; not that they pitied him, or felt remorse, when his piteous, half-whining cry reached their ears, but that there was little use to torture a man in such a state.

Perhaps it was that their minds had been sated for a certain time with cruelty, or perhaps, that some command came to them from the power without the temple walls. Be that as it may, Norris was left to himself during many weeks ; and to this rule there were but few exceptions. One day, indeed, the priests had opened the door leading into the court and pointed towards the prisoner as though explaining matters to a Chinaman in rich dress of red embroidered silk, who stood at the door in their midst.

Norris had even then been creeping upon the

gro
was :
whi
fallen in
ground,
again, a
to avoic
lay upo.
rich dres
stood wa
had turned

pon his hands and knees, as though there
ething above him which he feared, and
stroved to avoid in this way. For he had
o a strange manner of crawling upon the
est the drops that had fallen should fall
ary madness, he strove
ver and lower until he
e Chinaman, with the
had now brought, had
t pity, then at length
was alone once more.

The other his solitude were occa-
sioned by the visits of the priests, for these men
would come to watch his movements, and, as it
were, to gloat over his misery and the helpless
state of the man's mind.

April came, and with April came the return of
spring. The winter, severe whilst it lasts, breaks
suddenly in Pekin ; and as Norris regained his for-
mer state of mind, and as his madness passed away,
the days came when the heavy clothing was no
longer needed, and when he could sleep at nights
without the covering of the skins given to him.
It may be that, looking upon him for a time as
mad and never now likely to recover, the priests
became used to the fact of his existence ; for long
before this he had become merely as a thing which
belonged to the temple, as might a goat or a cow.

Although he was thus allowed to recover from
the effects of the lead—effects which had been

of prolonged duration—he was not totally forgotten. Little attention had been paid to him for weeks, and none knew, save the leaden-brained man who brought him his food, that Norris was once more sane and well, until, upon a day in mid April, several of the priests paid a visit to their half-forgotten prisoner.

To their surprise they found that the madness had passed away, and that Norris was once more in that condition in which he might be tortured and made to expiate his old, old sin, the strangling of the priest.

To Norris the visit caused some anxiety ; for, although till recently he had not regained a condition of mental capacity to notice such things, he still knew that for three weeks past he had been alone and unlooked upon save by the eyes of the man who brought him his food—a man who reminded him in no way of a priest, though he was one, for his heavy eye and visage betokened a dulness of brain incompatible with the customary shrewdness of the Chinese priest.

He was a priest none the less, though in truth he was a half-imbecile, and for this reason employed by his brethren to do the menial work. Matters were not now as formerly, when Norris had required surveillance, and the semi-idiot priest was sufficient guard upon a man himself driven mad by pain.

Thus the unlooked-for visit caused Norris no little trouble in his inmost thoughts ; for although

not yet so strong as to be by any means able to contemplate escape, he perceived that the priests might deem him to be so, and in this he was not far wrong.

Within four days he was removed from the courtyard to activity, where the ring was fixed which his ankle was chained ; captors, realising his sanity, cast minds for some fresh torture to

It has been Norris, on recovering possession of the molten lead had never taken place, in so far as he had completely forgotten the whole of the occurrences of that time, even including the shaving of his head.

Upon his head had grown new hair ; but Norris did not know that it was new, or that it was a strange shade of white, nor did he recall one incident of that time, which by a mental freak had become a blank.

It is probable that he might never have remembered it but for the torture imposed upon him immediately upon the discovery that his sanity of mind was an assured fact.

The Chinese are a calculating nation. They know well that agony of mind may be even greater than agony of body, and it was upon the mind of Norris that they had now determined to place the strain.

They knew nothing of his forgetfulness of the most hideous hours of his life ; they did not guess that all recollection of the ghastly rite was dead to Norris ; and they considered, therefore, that Norris might fear a repetition of the past if they took the first steps leading to the torture for a second time.

The fear of a thing, so they argued, is sometimes even worse than the reality itself. So, knowing that Norris could not yet bear the bodily tortures in store, they decided to act upon his mind by causing him to undergo a second time the preliminaries of the torture of the molten lead ; only these—no more.

Had they guessed that by this means they were destined to recall to the miserable man all that had passed during that time, which by God's mercy had become a blank, they would have seen that no torture more devilish than that which they had determined to inflict could have been invented by the subtle cruelty of their priestly minds.

When the mental faculties of the individual man exhibit a partial blank, such as had come upon William Norris—a thing of not unusual occurrence under the pressure of some sudden blow of misfortune—a system is frequently followed which leads the mind to recall everything from the recollection of some trifle round which incidents immediately cluster and gather till the whole past is laid bare.

So strange a thing is the memory of man, that the sound of a chord upon the piano, or the scent of a flower borne upon the breeze, will instantly bring before the mental eye some scene of a long-forgotten past, calling, as it were, from the world of events to live in dream again.

Thus, they did, only course Norris that entirely blot were ignorant of what was about to follow the return back to William's element which was now the end of memory.

To them, what they were about to do was merely to terrify him with the idea of a repetition; in reality it meant the re-awakening of the whole ghastly memory before this could be accomplished.

There was little, indeed, in what they now proceeded to do. The old scene was repeated in its earlier stages.

Norris, as he lay upon the ground, tied by the ankle so that he might not escape, perceived two of his captors enter, and with them came the third man—the man whose face was the last link between memory and the blank—the Chinese barber who had shaved his head.

On their entry, Norris was in utter ignorance of what was about to be done. The two priests watched him with disappointment; for it had been expected that on first seeing the barber Norris would at once jump to the conclusion that the

whole ordeal had a second time to be undergone—an impression which would be heightened as the man proceeded in the execution of his duty; and it was the intention to bring Norris so far and no further—to shave his head as in the old time, and to leave him a prey to expectancy of a repetition of his terrible doom—a doom which, always expected, would always seem to be near and yet never come!

What device could much exceed in cruelty that of the present conception of the temple priests?

Instead of exhibiting fear at the entry of the barber, however, Norris watched his movements curiously; for, as yet, he knew absolutely nothing of what might be in store, and was, indeed, in as complete ignorance of the torture of the molten lead as he had been months before, when the barber had last been at work upon his head. But his mind questioned within itself; for he was puzzled, since it seemed to him that he recollects having seen the barber before, and yet could go no further.

His reasoning faculties were upon the alert. "What had it been?" he questioned himself; "and where and when?"

At this point the Chinamen approached him, and in a few seconds he found himself tightly bound.

What were they about to do? What could it all mean? His dread was partly dissipated by a

vague der, but still he feared strangely whilst
the barbe bent over his head.

Then he felt the knife touch him, and the peculiar feeling of the moving of the Chinese razor suddenly set his whole mind ablaze with an intensity sensations, the one
struggling d still all was dark ;
but as the n slowly and carefully, as
was his habi he realised that his head
was being shoot of pain went
through his ed to still everything
else, and thei afterwards his memory
awoke.

He seemed to see his own head half bared, and upon his forehead, where the hair used to be, there were five round spots, which he felt 'eating into his brain as though the lead had been molten in each a second time. This it was that flashed across his recollection, bringing the whole of a forgotten horror instantly before him.

With a loud despairing cry he became senseless, and the Chinamen knew that they had not been wrong !

The barber had now no need to proceed with his task. A terrible uncertainty would face Norris on the return of consciousness—the endless wondering when the time would come and when the lead would fall.

All that they had desired was done ; so the barber put up his implements, and left Norris with the

fore part of his head shaven and the back untouched ; and, strange as it may seem, the hair did not grow again upon the shaven part for many, many months to come.

When his senses returned, there returned also the vision of that terrible time when, with the crowd of priests around him, he had been tied to the upright post ; and his hands would now wander ever and anon to his forehead, as though to linger upon the spots laid bare a second time by the renewed shaving of his head.

In addition to the hideous recollection of the past —the more vivid now that it had been recalled from darkness—there was the gnawing dread of the future, as designed by the priests, at a heart filled with doubt and expectation and endless fear.

He would start at the slightest noise, and the mere appearance of the man who brought his food would act upon his nerves in the most acute manner, for the sight of a fellow-creature had, to his agonized mind, become as a thing foreboding ill.

In the meantime, whilst he was a prey to all the combined feelings which form the tissue of supreme mental agony, the news had gone beyond the walls, and reached a higher ear than that of any member of the priesthood, that Norris was once more sane and in possession of his reasoning faculties.

It occurred to Norris frequently to wonder (when for a little he succeeded in partially banishing the pervading fears which had grown as a part of his

existence), as to what had ensued upon the return of his false cheque.

It will be remembered that from someone unknown he had received two notes demanding money as recompense for his freedom—a freedom which had never come to be an accomplished fact, and that he gave in answer a false order upon his home bankers' signed with a fictitious name.

He had calculated that four months might bring the return message from England, to the effect that his cheque was valueless and a forgery; and as this time must have now expired, he marvelled that he had heard nothing from his captor—the man who sought to extort a ransom by his confinement.

Norris was unaware that his imprisonment had been of such length as had been the actual case, for madness had in a measure caused him to pass through the winter months almost as it were in a dream; but he guessed that his confinement had been at least of more than four months' duration.

The reason that he had heard nothing as to the return of the false order from England was this—that he had not then been in a fit condition to hear or understand, and that on the single occasion upon which a visit had been paid to him by the man whose orders had first kept him captive in the temple, and whose wishes still over-ruled those of the priesthood, he found Norris in one of the worst phases of that temporary lunacy which, at that

time, he and the priests alike regarded as a thing that could not be lifted from the captive's mind.

So the man had been temporarily baulked ; for his victim had escaped him—so he thought—by going mad.

Norris's return to sanity meant, therefore, that once more he came beneath his enemy's control. It meant, moreover, the resumption of the torture and that of the attempted blackmail.

It may be that the unknown who had, in the earlier days of the Englishman's captivity, deemed it well only to write notes instead of appearing in person to interview and intimidate the prisoner, had then had some idea that liberty might be given to William Norris ultimately, since he was thus careful to hide his face.

Now, however, after the passing of months, when all concerned with the dastardly affair, even down to Norris himself, were becoming accustomed to a state of things, the novelty of which had completely worn off, it was no longer a necessity to deal with the captive by writing ; for what was to be feared by the disclosure of person or face ?

So it came to pass that Norris at last beheld his captor, as he might have beheld him long since, when he had stood upon the temple steps looking down upon him ; but Norris's brain had been clouded at that time, and his eyes filled with a light beyond which he could not truly see.

It was a bad sign indeed, for Norris, that he saw

his enemy at length; for his coming was proof, was it not, that the Englishman's captivity was now perpetual, since he who held him in bondage openly showed his face, and in person came to make his demand?

CHAPTER XVII.

THE STRUGGLE WITH THE SILENT PRIEST.

SOME ten days after the infliction of the priests' foul design of mental torture, Norris lay half reclining upon the ground one morning, watching sadly, as was his custom, for the passing of an occasional swallow across the court which opened from the temple in which he was chained ; and dwelling with vain conjecture and with a feeling of bitterness upon the fate of the messages which he had given to the air so uselessly months and months ago.

The birds had returned with the spring, and had begun to rebuild their nests. Now and then one of them would flit across the court, swooping low, it might be, and rising again to reach its nest in the temple-eave.

As each passed, Norris would look keenly at it, vainly endeavouring to see if those birds which carried his messages had returned to the temple, and, strangely enough, almost hoping that they had done so ; for, in his loneliness, a great love for the

birds filled him, for, as they alone carried the tale of his misery, they seemed thus to have something in common with him.

Pure and beautiful birds, he regarded them as friends possessing the secret of his imprisonment—a thought, only to the outside, for he did not know miles distant from Pekin, nor was he aware that his fellow's wing was already in another

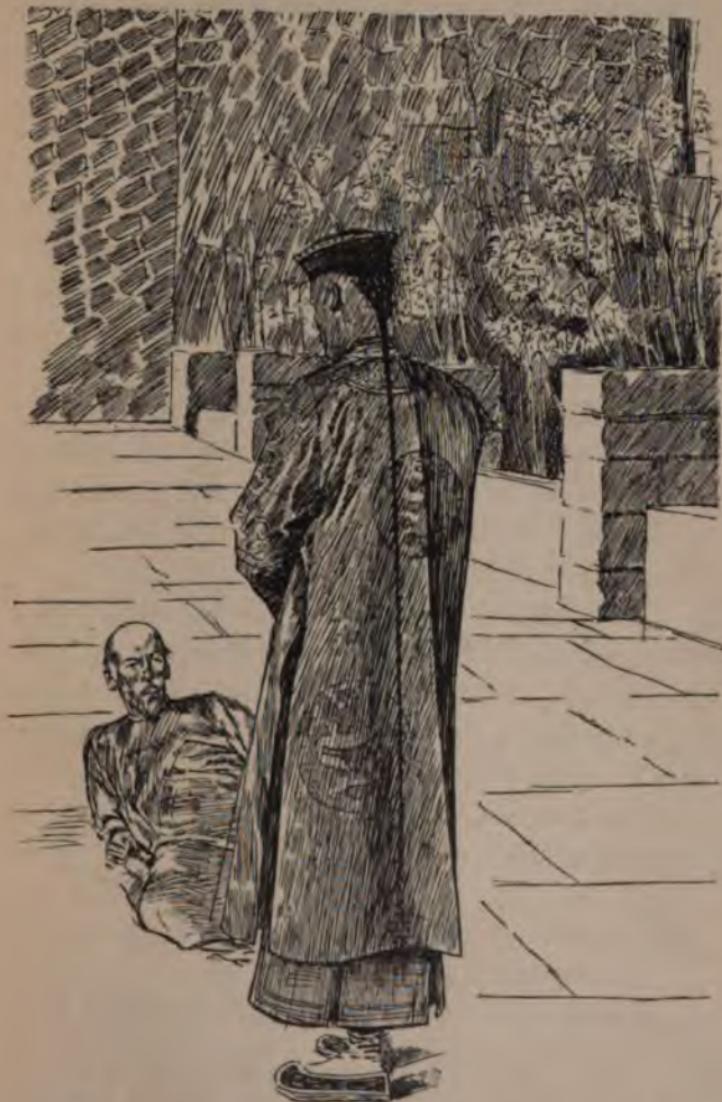
It was mentioned that the visitor came to him. He was a tall man, somewhat slight of build for the Northern Chinese, a race which has gained from the Tartar much of its strength;—his face was a cruel one;—his eye keen.

Norris guessed instinctively that this must be the man who, as his enemy, had kept him confined under the priests' control.

He perceived that the Chinaman must be one of high rank, since his garb was of the richest silk, and embroidered with the dragon, which he knew that only those of high degree had the right to wear.

Several of the priests accompanied the mandarin.

Norris, by an effort, conquered that feeling of fear which the mere approach of the Chinese priests caused him, and sought inwardly to collect strength.



The mandarin approached and stood over him.—p. 260.

The mandarin approached and stood over him, looking down upon him with a cruel and sneering glance.

"You pay!" he said slowly;—for he spoke English with difficulty, and in laconic and stilted measure—

"You pay this note!" He held in his hand the false order which he had retained after its refusal, and a letter which had evidently accompanied it. "Read!" he continued; and as he spoke, he bent slightly forwards. Norris half rose, and took the letter from his hand. The Chinaman watched him coldly as he read, which he did slowly, perhaps with the wish to frame some plan of denial and thus to gain time.

The document which he held in his hand was a short note, dated long previous. It was in English, but not the best of English, and written evidently by a foreigner; from which fact it was evident that the Chinese recipient was not a master of many foreign tongues, or the letter had not been in English—thus it ran:—

"To Shan-min-yuen, in the City Imperial, Pekin.

"The English cheque I am sending you returned; for it is not good. It is returned from the English bank, and I am waiting to know how I must say it has been given. The bank is no more knowing him; for there is no such name as you see noted there. I am paying all small charge, and my friends ask explanations; so please inform how I shall act, for the amount is great. From whom are

you obtaining this note? Advise me, that I may assist to obtain recourse. I am writing you more very soon, but now send you the note only in haste, that you may lose no time; and other things must stand some days.

"Yours truly,—L. BONSEL."

As Norris read these lines a sickening feeling overcame him.

A European, then, was hand and glove with this Chinaman, and was aiding him and abetting him in his system of extortion. One of his own fellows—for Norris never looked upon the Chinese as his fellows—was plotting against him. How, then, could he escape his doom? For a second cheque would come back like the first; or this European might ascertain, without presenting it, that the false name had no account at the bank.

The mere idea that it was a European who was the moving spirit of his imprisonment and his misery crushed him, and then anger welled up within him in a futile rebellion against his fate.

He rose to his feet, and, crushing the note in his hand, threw it from him, and stood facing the tall Chinaman, whose brow darkened ominously at the act.

One of the priests picked up the crumpled letter, whilst Norris, carried away by his feelings, and standing at the full length of the chain around his ankle, burst out vehemently in a torrent of words, half curse and half defiance, whilst the

Chin; addressed stood at a little distance, listening with a cold smile.

Norris's voice sounded strangely to his own ear, for he had not spoken for so long that he had half forgotten how to modulate its tones.

The man the passion had spent itself.

Then

" You are s are nothing. You deceive ; the me. If you pay true note you go -yuen knows the true note."

Norris, still in the agony of his distressed state of mind, wondered dimly if this was true. Had the Chinaman guessed his *ruse*, and known from the first that the note was false ? And had he by this act brought upon himself the terrible tortures which had ensued ?

It was an awful thought, that for a thousand pounds he might perhaps have been spared all, might have been a free man, and he had hesitated to pay that sum ! Norris did not know that much, nay, perhaps the whole of his past torture had been consequent on his murder of the priest and in expiation of that sin. Nor had he taken account of the date of the note which he had crushed and thrown from him, or he would have concluded differently.

" Once more," Shan-min-yuen continued, " I give you chance. Write true note fifty Englishman's hundred pounds, you go free."

STRUGGLE WITH THE SILENT PRIEST. 263

So the sum was increased from one thousand pounds to five thousand pounds. Norris had scarcely so large a cash amount in the hands of his bankers. To obtain it he would require to instruct the disposal of some securities. How could he do this from the Temple of Confucius, where every line from his pen would be scrutinized most closely, and destroyed if to the Chinese mind there was the slightest trace of aught of a suspicious nature?

What, then, was he to do? The former demand he might have met. This he could not—that is to say, without the ability to write instructions in full. Bitterness filled him. If, indeed, the Chinaman spoke the truth, and had known that his previous note was false, then it was likely, granting that he now signed with his own name, and gave the increased sum demanded, that his previous deceit would still be held as reason to keep him a captive, for months to come, until the money was truly paid. And when it was paid, what then? So long a time would have elapsed that the Chinaman would have forgotten his promise.

Norris guessed something of the avaricious nature of the race, and felt a hopeless foreboding and a fear that when the true order had been paid, and the news that the money had been secured came back to Pekin, this would only incite his captors to fresh cruelty and to an unending system of promises never to be fulfilled, by which they

might run to the uttermost both his fortune and his hope.

Shan-min-yuen waited for his answer, whilst Norris, with a dogged, sullen look upon his face, reviewed the situation.

"Well," said the Chinaman at last, "you understand?"

"I understand," said Norris, "but I must pay you this."

An idea occurred to him. "If you will let me hope succeed in my escape, I will pay you a true note."

The mandarin, however, did not smile.

"You pay here," was his answer. "If you pay here, you are free."

It was as Norris had anticipated. His order must go to England for payment before he should be set free. The transaction must be completed before freedom could be hoped for. The momentary hope was gone.

"I will pay a true note when I am free," he answered; "not now."

"You pay now!" said the mandarin in a commanding tone. "You receive no choice; you pay now."

"I refuse," was the firm reply. "I pay after, not before."

Shan-min-yuen looked at him. They were a strange contrast, the two—Norris, with his half-shaven head and his grey hairs, and with the

drawn look upon his face, facing his foe firmly as he stood before him ; the Chinaman, tall and richly dressed, looking callously, with a hard light in his eyes, upon the prisoner whom he had determined to subdue.

Shan-min-yuen spoke to the priests. One of these departed, and a moment or two later returned with paper and Chinese ink and pen.

These he placed upon the floor, within reach of the captive, and then Shan-min-yuen again addressed him :

"English fool ! you write true note very soon ; evil things can make you write."

Norris dimly knew what was meant.

"When you write true," continued the mandarin, "I come again : you write soon—you write soon."

With a sneer he turned away, and ere Norris could speak again he had gone.

"Evil things can make you write." What evil things ? Was it further torture—further application of the molten lead ? His brain reeled at the thought.

Yes, this man had power over him, and might command him as he should please. Tortures ! he could not bear them now ; his constitution was ruined by what had already been inflicted. He could not bear the repetition of the hideous days gone by. What was he to do ?

Shan-min-yuen ! who was he, that the priests obeyed him ? and how came it, that it was he who

now commanded Norris to pay this sum? Had it been given, by the mandarin's orders that he had first been captured? Nay, surely not; for it had been but by a chance that he had visited the temple upon the day from which dated all his misery.

Who, t
questioned

This, he,
he held the
power to en
captive, bu
the wretched man w

han-min-yuen? He

at whosoever he was,
he meant to use that
by the death of his
i, and by the papers
be forced to sign.

For how could Norris stand against Chinese torture? The yielding-time *must* come: was it not better, he asked himself bitterly, that it should be now—now before his life was further sapped; now before his brain became again a hell; now before the lead should drop again?

To Norris there was nothing more hideous than the lead. He looked forward to suffering thus again because his head had been half-shaved, and he saw the awful moments drawing near him now that Shan-min-yuen had come and gone.

Filled with agonised thought, he gave vent to his despair in sobs of agony, weeping as a woman might weep, tears which, coming like drops of blood from his heart, yet eased him.

He was alone, and it was well. His broken spirit prompted him to yield: he could not face what was to come.

STRUGGLE WITH THE SILENT PRIEST. 267

Already the threat of Shan-min-yuen was bearing fruit. The yielding-time had already come!

He turned to the paper placed near him, and took the Chinese brush in his hand, dipping it in the ink ; and then—kneeling upon the ground, this strange-looking man traced certain lines in a handwriting different indeed from that of William Norris, and yet written by him as true, as from his own hand, and signed with his own name.

It was an order to his bankers to raise the necessary funds, and to pay the sum of five thousand pounds.

Norris had been easily conquered in the end !

Deeply engrossed in his work, seeing nothing, and hearing nothing, so intent was he, and so filled with the thoughts which had caused his yielding, Norris had scarcely finished the last letter of his name, when a hand was laid upon the paper upon which he wrote.

Norris looked up, and saw that one of the priests had returned, and had now bent over him to take the order which he had signed.

This action caused an immediate revulsion of feeling. The Chinaman held the paper, and had half drawn it away : Norris seized it firmly, for he instantly felt that his act had been premature.

His weakness in yielding was patent to him. The paper must not leave his hand ; it must be destroyed.

The Chinaman, perhaps irritated at the detention of the paper, or it may be, perceiving intuitively the impulse which actuated the Englishman, instantly released his hold; and before Norris could properly secure the sheet, a severe blow upon his side; for together thus to

The blow not struck Norris on the temple by its severity he was momenta | the written paper, he recovered himself as the Chinaman lifted the sheet. With a terrible and despairing effort, he rose and threw himself after the man, forgetful of the chain around his ankle.

There was a wrench upon his ankle, causing acute agony; but Norris was maddened, and did not feel the full force of the pain, and, as the Chinaman was just moving beyond his reach, he caught his enemy by the foot and held on—as the chain at his own ankle held on—with iron force.

A few seconds only had been occupied by the whole occurrence; the Chinaman had knocked him to the ground, had seized the paper, and had then himself been seized. The priest felt that he was now slowly, yet none the less surely, being drawn back with the energy which despair gave to the Englishman's clutch.

Norris and he were alone; and he, although



Norris caught his enemy by the foot and head on.—*p. 208.*



STRUGGLE WITH THE SILENT PRIEST. 271

Norris did not know it, was one of those few priests whose vows bind them to everlasting silence.

This was the reason that he made no cry.

He had been silent for fourteen years, and now, facing peril, no sound issued from his priestly lips.

He dropped the paper upon the ground, and turned, bending his body double, as he now lay on the ground, in order to bite Norris's hand ; but the mere action brought him further within the Englishman's reach, and before he could succeed in his design, another hand was fastened upon him, and then a terrible struggle commenced.

Norris, at the end of his chain, with the iron ring tearing at his foot, fought like one possessed, whilst the priest, although a much older man, had still the remnants of a strength once great ; and they rolled over together in a struggle of life and death, within the confines of the chain.

It may be that the wrenching pain upon his ankle gave Norris an added strength, for he slowly forced the other back ; and although the Chinaman strove with his teeth to grip Norris by the neck, he was gradually overcome, till at last Norris's hand was upon the priest's throat.

The priest still struggled, and fought wildly ; but the hand-clench was a thing from which there was no escaping, and with the Chinaman the teeth had more power than the hands.

S head was held back for a few seconds till his became dark, and his grasp lessened ; and Norri knew then that he had nothing now to fear, and himself sank back wounded and exhausted beside his foe.

It w for Norris that his grip upon laxed, for he had come within murder, and a second desecr herein he lay.

The l, though he had stood on the ath.

Thus —Norris panting alike with the exertion of the struggle and the pain which he still endured—and the priest, unconscious, by his side.

As he lay thus, it flashed across Norris that he had not secured the paper after all, for it was before him at a little distance upon the ground.

His faculties seemed to grip together as though his every sense crushed into a narrow space a single aching desire.

The paper was beyond his reach !

CHAPTER XVIII.

"TORTURE, BUT DO NOT KILL."

THE situation to Norris, in the overstrung condition of his nerves, was horrible in the extreme.

It was a little thing surely that the paper which he had written and signed for his captors should have been taken from him, and should now be apparently beyond recovery. But it must be remembered that he had been driven by weakness to write it, having visions of self-conceived and hideous tortures before him, and that the revulsion of feeling had been heightened till the little thing grew into a great thing through the terrible life-and-death struggle with the silent priest.

That his strength, called upon alike by the emergency of the moment and by the wrenching pain upon his foot, should have sustained him only that he should be conquered by adversity in the end, was bitter indeed, and it is little wonder that, in the intensity of his desire, his every thought was concentrated on how to reach the paper upon the

ground before him by any means possible, ere another priest should enter the temple.

So excited was he, that some minutes passed ere he hit upon a very simple expedient which might yet bring the paper within his reach.

Lying at the full length of his chain, he was still about a yard short of the necessary distance; but he now recollect ed that the insensible frame of the priest whom he believed to be dead was beside him, and that the priest's arm might accomplish what his own could not.

Taking hold of his late enemy's arm, he dragged the priest's body forward, and thus, lying upon his face, he stretched out the insensible arm to the paper, which it was just sufficiently long enough to reach.

His face came within an inch of that of the Chinaman, but so intent was he on his task that he did not notice that the other's features almost touched his own. He pushed forward the man's body so that his outspread hand fell upon the edge of the paper, but the priestly palm could not clutch it to draw it towards him.

Then ensued moments of intense anxiety, for the body of his foe was heavy and difficult to move, and the arm, although reaching the paper, scarcely moved it, every motion being so slow. At length Norris saw that he was making progress, for by repeated efforts he had succeeded in causing the priest's arm to draw the paper an inch or two

nearer him, and in a few moments more he felt that, if he were still alone and undisturbed by the return of others of his captors, he would hold the order in his hand.

Nearer and yet nearer it came, though Norris, worn out with his conflict, found it hard indeed to move the arm and body of the priest, as was necessary to his design.

The paper was crumpled on the far side; but the part nearest to him lay flat upon the ground, wherein had consisted the primary difficulty.

But now that it had once been moved, all was well; and Norris was about to stretch forth his own hand, thinking that the paper might be within his own utmost reach, when the lips, a few inches from his own, emitted a long-drawn sigh.

He felt his enemy's breath upon his cheek, and shuddered terribly, for he had believed the man to be dead; whereas, by the working of the arm, he had himself helped to bring about the return to consciousness, for his efforts had something of the effect, though in a smaller degree, of those expedients used to recall a man to life when breath has been suspended by partial drowning.

He looked upon the priest's face, becoming aware for the first time that it was close to his, and with horror he realised that his foe was not dead, or rather as it appeared to him the Chinaman had been dead, and was now restored to life.

The discovery seemed to suspend the beating of his heart.

It had been horrible to use the dead limbs for the attainment of his object ; it was more horrible still to use the living arm to complete his task.

For a second he could not finish the task, now that he might even have done, namely, to strangle the Englishman. He thought, and he could not.

Little time had he to consider, for at this jun-
perceived two other priests crossing the courtyard
and approaching him. Struggling to still his fears
he once more seized the priest's arm and stretched
it forth till the hand rested again upon the paper—a
second time he did this, and the paper was within
reach—but the Chinaman was already moving
in his grasp, and the two others, who had newly
come, stood within the temple.

Norris clutched the paper wildly in his hand, and tore it into shreds.

The priests were upon him instantly. To them it was evident that the Englishman was murdering a member of their brotherhood whom he had held in his arms as they reached the Temple Hall.

But neither they nor their fellows ever knew the true meaning of the Englishman's act, apparently strangling, at one moment, a member of their priesthood, the next wildly tearing a paper into

many pieces, as they sprang forward and cast themselves upon him, for the priest was a silent man, and could not tell them in the days to come of a struggle whose origin and cause he and Norris alone had known.

Norris, to the priests' thinking, had failed in his design, and had escaped by a hair's breadth from a second murder; but he was, from this time forth, regarded as a dangerous man, and one to be watched constantly by the temple priests.

The result of Shan-min-yuen's visit was not at once brought forcibly home to the prisoner after this event. Hour succeeded hour in a monotony of fear, but the priests made no immediate move, after effecting the rescue, as they deemed it, of their half-throttled and silent brother.

Further than a minute surveillance upon his every act, he was not immediately subjected to the tortures which he still anticipated must surely come.

The threat, perhaps, was allowed time to eat its way into his heart before the accomplishment was undertaken, or the priests and the man who ruled them were hatching some new plot towards the destruction of one whose obstinacy was thus to be overcome.

The suspense was terrible in the extreme, though the only trace of the interview and of Shan-min-yuen's threat was the presence of the guard now constantly with Norris, night and day.

After a few days had passed Norris began to notice a peculiar taste in the food furnished to him.

He had long since grown accustomed to the eating of the messes placed before him, and indeed had become callous as to what was furnished for his meals, so that he did not immediately recognise the presence of this, until, after several days of its continuance, he noticed that this flavour, which was not in itself absolutely objectionable, crept into everything which he put to his lips, even into the water that he drank.

For a little while he looked upon it as a delusion, for it was impossible, it seemed to him, that his water should carry the same insinuating flavour to his lips as did the food he ate; but gradually he came to understand that it was no fancy upon his part, but that for some reason the priests had determined that everything given to him, whether to eat or drink, should be tainted with the same flavour. When he knew it, his soul turned sick, for the constant presence of a single taste ever on his palate must in time fill him with nausea; and though there be to some but small pleasure in eating (to Norris especially was it so at this time), yet the thought that every drop of water or mouthful of food must shortly bear with it a feeling of disgust is one fraught, indeed, is it not, with horror beyond words?

More than this, there was, or at least, Norris

fancied that there was, some hidden reason for the course now pursued.

Why should this flavour be present always ; and for what cause was it imparted to every article of food ? What was it ? A poison of slow yet sure result ?—and, if so, what would be the effect upon him who ate ? As yet he was not ill ; but the mere discovery of the constant presence of the unknown in his food caused him to conjecture vaguely as to the expected result, and from this he commenced to imagine things. and gradually to be filled with strange fears which preyed upon him constantly, so that he scarcely dared to eat, or to touch the hideously tasted water, though he craved alike for food and drink.

When he did eat, he faced, in addition to the nausea, a more terrible sickness of spirit, believing that every hour he approached nearer to some fearful end ; and whether this was to be reached through bodily pain or by some poisonous influence upon his mind he could not tell.

This was but another of the subtle inventions of the priests. In the flavour constantly imparted to the prisoner's food there was nothing that might poison or injure ; there was that, indeed, at which the palate might in time revolt, but nothing more. The rest was left to the Englishman to conceive : the torture lay within himself.

There is, however, little visible result in such agony to the onlooker ; and although the priests

knew that Norris's mind had fostered its own misery, they were in a sense disappointed with the result attained, which, to the outward eye, consisted chiefly in his abstinence from food and drink; for the mind of one man cannot truly perceive the phantoms

The paper lay still untouched beside the ink still lay untouched
possession of the struggle to regain
weakness, he strength, in a moment of
the sight of signed, he shunned
surrender; the trials of his temporary
determination now to have gained new
to struggle with his silent foe.

Several days had passed, and Norris, although weakened mentally and physically by the unknown horror which cast its shadow so deeply upon him, had still given no yielding sign; and the priests, instigated in part by instructions from beyond the temple walls, and in part acting on their own responsibility, determined upon fresh bodily torture for the miserable man who would not yield.

It was for a cause differing from that of months ago that Norris was now tortured—a cause, that is to say, differing in the main and yet not unconnected with that of earlier days.

When at the first he had been made a captive by the priests, they, fearing lest their deed might prove ill-advised, had sent two of their number to Shan-min-yuen with a humble confession and a prayer

for advice as to what they should now do with the foreigner, whose resistance to their attempted extortion and whose subsequent violence had landed him a prisoner within their walls.

If they released him, they feared the future ; if they killed him, they also feared ; for the priestly mind, despite its cruelty, was deeply imbued with fear : and therefore they came to the mandarin, their adopted father, for advice, humbly bringing a tale of lies which might excuse their act. To them it seemed probable that the mandarin's anger would be great when he learned what had occurred.

Shan-min-yuen received the deputation, and, immediately upon learning the particulars which the priests had to narrate, he perceived that the circumstances might easily be turned to his advantage. The priests knew no English, whilst he could speak and write that tongue—badly, it is true, but still sufficiently to convey to an Englishman, or to a foreigner who spoke English, whatsoever he desired.

He was not long in framing his plans.

He hastened to reassure the priests, or rather to do so in part ; his crafty mind perceived that by acting alike upon their fear and greed, and upon their ignorance of the English tongue, he might eventually gain much from what was to be regarded, as far as he was concerned, as a lucky chance.

That the priests should let Norris escape was no part of his idea ; he mentally laid out other designs for the man now within his power.

They had done a wrong and an ill-advised thing, so he told them ; but what was done was done, and it was well tha
to which th
feared, so he
friendly with
some way pur
fore caution v
time, there wa
o him. The nation
ed was one to be
Chinese powers were
would assuredly in
for the act. There
whilst, at the same
or fear.

The priests, or some or number, had originally sought to extort money from Norris. A small sum would then have sufficed, or, indeed, an equal division of his *tiaos* might have mitigated the priestly greed ; but, as it was, he had been taken prisoner owing to his own rough action in attempting to escape ; and prisoner he must now remain until he should agree to the new conditions imposed by Shan-min-yuen.

It has been remarked as strange that members of a priesthood, richly endowed by Shan-min-yuen's father, should have been filled with avarice for the small sums which the Englishman might disburse ; but it must be remembered that those priests who had acted as Norris's guides were probably of the lowest grade, and that the temple's wealth, although shared by them in a measure as regards sustenance, clothing, and all the necessaries of life, did not come

into their possession as actual coin ; and that even had it done so, it is not to be looked for in a Chinaman that wealth should satiate his greed. The miserly instinct, when inherent in the nature, is a thing that grows and is never satisfied, feed it how we may.

Shan-min-yuen's answer was more favourable than the priests expected ; it is true there was a touch of uncertainty and fear still left upon their minds, but that was a small matter and would soon pass away.

The priests had wanted money : they should have it, so he said ; he would write a note, which they could bear to Norris, demanding a certain sum—he was to hand them, be it said, but one-twentieth of the actual amount named in his epistle. How could the priests know that they had not received the whole ?

The deputation had at first been unable to understand the proposal : how, they argued, could the Englishman obtain the money, since he had none upon his person ? It was impossible for him to make gold without being released from the temple.

Shan-min-yuen briefly explained that it was possible to write to another to pay. In addition, Shan-min-yuen led the priests to believe that he would bind the prisoner over to silence before he left the temple ; but, in reality, he had determined to keep Norris a prisoner for life, and by renewed

promises of freedom to extort various sums, as he might find it good.

The Temple of Confucius had taken from Shan-min-yuen in the old time all the money which ought to have been his; he saw the possibility of now regaining it, and he would be able to extract in time from the priests, perhaps, of the temple, and more than all, father had left to the

So he gave
the first of a
Norris, as ha
the false chequ.

at he intended to be
and they bore it to
in the end he signed
king over matters,

Shan-min-yuen wondered at the readiness of the payment. Was this man, he questioned, true; and was the cheque worth the amount there noted?

He could not tell, but in the meantime determined to extort only the one note now brought him, and to await Bonsel's advice that all was well. He sent the order to be dealt with in the usual way, as a business transaction to his German friend.

Hence it came that Norris, in signing falsely, placed a barrier between himself and those who came to seek him. Bonsel many months after had forgotten the incident of the worthless cheque sent by Shan-min-yuen, or if he did remember it, it was chiefly to wonder whether the mandarin had ever obtained his money through another source.

How different might all have been had Norris first signed in his own name!

Bonsel was not a quick-witted man, so that his mind traced no connection whatever between the returned cheque bearing another name and William Norris; and this is natural, we must admit, seeing that to the German his Chinese friend was upright and true, so much so indeed that the German pressed Vanscombe and Chin-chin-wa to visit his friend and to obtain his aid. Had Norris signed truly, he would have lost a thousand pounds; but at least those who came to seek him would at once have got the clue, since Bonsel would, in all probability, have recalled the name when Vanscombe first brought the affair before him.

Upon receiving the cheque, Shan-min-yuen explained to the priests that it was not yet time for the prisoner to be set free; but, as stated, he did not press Norris for more money, waiting rather till Bonsel should hand him over the proceeds of the first extortion.

In the meantime the priests treated their prisoner more leniently, until the day of the temple's desecration, and Norris's attempt to escape, when a terrible fate became his.

Such had been the past. Now the case was altered: the order had been returned, placing Shan-min-yuen in a position difficult to explain to his German friend; and he was both infuriated with

feelings of anger and disappointment, and filled with the strong determination that Norris should yet yield.

He had come, therefore, to the temple to look upon Norris in his madness; and his anger upon beholding him in such a condition which he knew must render the priest useless to him, and take from him all desire of gain, rebounded upon the Fugitive. His master's desecration was now complete, whilst his avarice was all in all.

It is true that the priests had come to tell him of the murder of his master, but themselves permitted the torture which, in their frenzy, was almost an impossible thing to stay; but now, months later, when he looked upon the result, and knew that the condition Norris had been reduced to ended the system of extortion which he had hoped to pursue, his anger fell upon the priesthood in threats terrible to their cowardly souls.

But threats are impotent when they remain as such, and Shan-min-yuen's anger for the present confined itself to these.

Time went on. Shan-min-yuen and the priests still stood apart from one another; but the latter permitted William Norris to live, lest they should, in the event of his death, anger the great man the more.

At length came Norris's unlooked-for recovery; yet the priests did not at once go to Shan-min-

yuen with the news of it, but in their own evil hearts conceived fresh tortures for the Englishman who had desecrated their holy place and had also brought misfortune upon them in the anger of the mandarin.

Then it was that, after having so far satisfied their lust for another's agony, they went to Shan-min-yuen ; and he came and saw the victim who had survived their cruelty, and whose mind was once more cleared. From the time of this interview the priests and Shan-min-yuen worked in concert and yet apart.

It was a strange position—the position which had existed in the past and existed again.

The priests obeyed Shan-min-yuen ; they were to torture, but not to kill, until such time as Norris should write upon the paper which lay constantly by his side. Thus far they carried out their instructions to the letter. But they went further than this, deceiving the man whom they called father ; for they cared little what the torture might effect, so that it satisfied their thirst for cruelty and revenge. Shan-min-yuen did not know of all the ghastly horrors which the priestly minds conceived.

To them it was nothing if Norris were to go mad, save that it ended his misery.

Shan-min-yuen had said. "Torture—do so constantly, but do not kill." They obeyed.

So there was, as there always had been from the

RESULTS

MATERIALS

METHODS

DATA

DISCUSSION

REFERENCES

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

NOTES

APPENDIX

CHAPTER XIX.

THE BASTINADO.

SHAN-MIN-YUEN well knew that his command, "Torture," would be obeyed, and he imagined that at an early date the Englishman must yield. But he had forgotten that Norris was now in such a condition that the strain applied must not be too great a one, and that though he could bear a certain amount of pain, an excess of it would but reduce him to powerlessness alike of mind and body once more.

The priests, on the contrary, remembered this ; for it was fresh in their recollection that, after a terrible torture, their victim had fallen into a condition in which fresh pain could effect but little ; and although it was of small concern to them that he should reach that point again, it was yet more in accordance with their crafty cruelty and hideous revenge that it should be brought about slowly and not rapidly ; that the end finally in view should not be approached too nearly, until they had satiated themselves with a fellow-creature's sufferings and avenged their brother's death by inflicting slow and lasting agonies.

T

The mandarin had given his command, and for the rest he left to the priests the means to be employed to attain his personal object, though it was he indeed, who invented the diabolical thing which was to be the acme of all that Norris suffered. It is to be described.

In the
and ghas-
tion, the
they mi

Shan-min-yuen's final
to be put into execu-
heir power to do as

Tiring
inflicted
parted to every article of food and to every drop
of water which reached the prisoner's lips, they
therefore cast about for some new device which
would occasion more visible agony.

They chose a simple expedient—the bastinado.

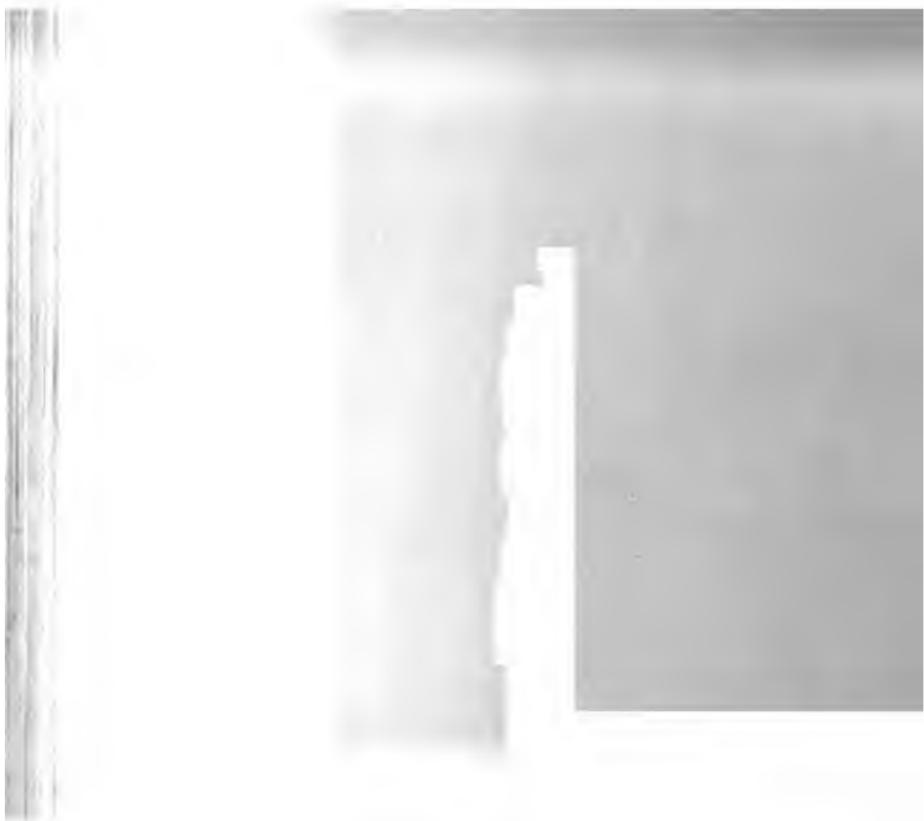
The bastinado! You may see it used in Canton, if you visit the Chinese court. In Pekin it is more difficult to see, and but few of those who read these lines will ever stand within the Pekin walls; but in Canton any one may look upon the criminal punishment in the open court.

Why should not the court be open? It is best that the curious multitude of the lowest grades should flock to gaze upon a fellow-creature's agony, whilst the air is filled with his piercing shrieks. It is well that they should see and know, so that they may themselves avoid a crime.

So at least think the Chinese.



The bastinado.—*p.* 290.



Picture the scene within the court. The criminal lies, face downwards, on the ground. Men hold his feet and hands. The judge sits cold and cruel, and the curious crowd press near. Picture the bare limbs quivering with the man's agony in expectation of the stroke, and mark, whilst fascinated by a horror beyond description's power, the bastinado lifted and falling again, and yet again, until the whole soul sickens at the awfulness of a punishment which is surely in itself the most terrible crime.

It is upon the back of the thigh that the blow must fall—that part where the limb thickens just above the knee; and to him who has to bear its pain it is well to give some grass, that he may clutch anything in his teeth and hands save the mere emptiness of the air, so that the teeth may not cross or bite the tongue and that the nails may not dig into the flesh.

Such was the nature of the torture to be inflicted upon Norris.

In its full severity the strain would prove too great; but a stroke or two daily might well be borne, and the knowledge that as each day came, so the bastinado would fall upon the bruised and swollen limb, would suffice to furnish a torture of the most exquisite kind.

The bastinado is a long and supple strip of bamboo or other wood, flattened to the breadth of, say, two to three inches, and in length possibly three yards.

It is raised above the shoulder, high in the air, and then rapidly descending, falls with full impetus upon the human flesh.

Who can describe the frenzied thoughts which blacken the victim's soul when that awful weapon descends

A single
have been
scarcely h
tion, or the
greatest a
doomed to
bastinado, so
long as

strokes would indeed
iment, but it would
e ; it is in the repeti
ne repetition, that the
nd. So Norris was
or two daily from the
ind and body would
bear the strain.

He was awakened from a troubled sleep early one morning by the entry of a number of priests into the temple building where he was confined. He instantly foresaw that something terrible was again in store for him; for cruelty was marked upon every one of the cold priestly faces that surrounded him as he lay. He immediately concluded that his time had come, and that the molten lead, feared for so long a time, was now at length to fall again, and, convulsed with strange shiverings, his strength entirely left him.

One of the priests released Norris's foot from the chain which had held him to the floor; and then, as he did not move—for he seemed too prostrated by fear to have power to do so—several others took him by the arms and legs, lifted him on high,

and thus bore him from the building out into the light of the morning sun, which was filling the courtyard with its golden glory.

In the temple halls themselves no torture must take place, save of that indefinable nature which acts only upon the mind ; the Englishman's shrieks must not rise in their unholy clamour within the confines of that most sacred space.

So he was borne into the open air ; and before he had realised that there were now no preparations for tortures of the molten lead, and ere he had observed the presence of an evil-visaged man who held upright a long and narrow piece of wood, which, resting on the ground, reached with the other end above his head, he was placed face downwards upon a number of boards which had been fixed together so as to form a substitute for a wooden floor.

To bear the blow of the bastinado upon the cold stone of the courtyard might truly have proved too severe a cruelty ; for the teeth, in moments such as these, bite wildly, and will bury themselves anywhere, in the awful madness that takes possession of the victim.

A quantity of grass was placed beneath his face and he was now held firmly in such a position that he could not move.

Chinese hands held his feet ; Chinese hands held his outstretched wrists.

His hands no one touched, save to put grass

under either palm, and then all was ready for the bastinado-stroke.

As these preparations were rapidly completed, Norris grasped the truth that it was some new torture, some unknown thing, and not the molten lead which

He strove
one held his
upon the g
it should not

For a secon
tancy, than
contain a more av...
his brain reeled with fear of the unknown.

ut could not ; some
mouth should rest
the board, and that
ilder—his own flesh.
blackness of expec-
l itself can scarcely
ircled around him ;

The man with the strip of wood stood back, and Norris felt his clothing drawn from off his haunch.

Then the bastinado was raised aloft, immediately descending upon his flesh. The broken agony of a man's heart went up to the vaults of the morning sun in a loud cry, whilst his hands gripped upon themselves, and his teeth clenched upon the grass, and then all was still.



When he had so far recovered as to know that he still lived, he found that he had been re-conveyed to the temple, and that the chain was once more affixed to his ankle.

Slowly he remembered what had happened, and,

as the recollection came to him, he wondered that he had survived the torture.

His poor swollen limbs ached ceaselessly, and he lay still throughout the day, filled with evil thoughts, induced by the terrible pain from his wounded flank which seemed to spread through every portion of his body, and in a state of mind wherein his soul sent up an unending cry of defiance to his God. Was it wonderful that Norris should have reached this pass?

He was alone. The ink and paper were beside him; he seized them as a madman might have done in the height of some frenzy, tore the paper wildly, and cast it and the Chinese ink and brush far from him, so that he might not be tempted to yield again.

As the day wore on, the man set as watch over him returned and gave him food.

He placed this food at the furthest point to which Norris, lying on his face, could reach; for there was a look in the captive's eye which warned him that it was not well to come within the reach of an arm which had already killed one of the brotherhood and half strangled another.

Paper and ink were not given to him again, and the day passed, as all time to him now passed, slowly along its evil course.

His food was still tainted with the flavour that had sickened him, but it now caused his stomach no revolt. He ate and drank with avidity.

Strangely enough, Norris never had dreamed of suicide, and this is probably explainable in that his mind was so shattered by all the evil that came upon him, that it strove to contend against everything of a horrible nature.

To have dashed his brains out upon the floor would surely have been a fit punishment for his sufferings ; and perhaps the guiding suggestion which kept him from such a course was that of the suggestion that it was better to self-destruct than to let the world know of his misery. It was this latter thought that led him to the full determination to end his life.

In addition to the physical sufferings of the bastinado, the method whereby they attempted to increase the agony of the intervening time. They had placed by his side, as he now found, a sheet of metal with smoothed surface, polished so that no mirror could more truly portray the reflection seen therein ; and upon this they believed that the miserable man would gaze, seeing his own face, and his half-shaven head and grey hairs, with increasing horror.

They were partly right in this conclusion, but not wholly so ; for although the shock experienced by Norris upon first perceiving the reflection of his own changed features, now drawn and altered almost past recognition was great indeed, yet the terror of the first glance gradually wore away, and was replaced by something resembling pleasure—the pleasure of pain, if it may be so described, which led him to regard the reflection with a

degree of interest which was unintelligible to himself.

There is little doubt but that the human mind will, under certain circumstances, derive satisfaction from dwelling upon its own agony.

For this reason the mirror-torture was not what the priests believed it to be ; since by causing fresh thoughts to the victim, and in giving him a new interest in noting the lines that, to his exaggerating mind, grew deeper daily upon his face, his thoughts were distracted.

During the first night of the bastinado-torture, whilst all was still, the paper and the ink were again placed by him, and when the following morning dawned, Norris saw it, and wondered what was to happen on the day now born, since he still shrank from the mere suggestion of writing as he had been bid.

Ere long all was to be made clear to him. Yesterday's programme was to be enacted a second time in every particular, even to the most minute detail.

When the priests released his ankle, Norris struggled fearfully, but was at length secured and overcome.

Then he was taken to the courtyard and again laid upon the boards, with the grass beneath his face and within his palms.

And then again, perhaps with greater pain, if that be possible, than on the previous day, the blow

fell upon limbs still aching with those of twenty-four hours before! Once again Norris, with teeth and hands clasped the grass in frenzied agony, and again his cry went forth, and again evil took possession of his soul.

Still he mind of)
of the sub- than we
nature wi- brain, and
will that)

the effect upon his
he silent priest, and
d been a deeper one
artook, in fact, of a
ain functions of the
om him *the power to*

A second from him the writing materials—cast them away in anger and in pain ; yet it was not necessary for him to so cast them away, for even had they remained within his reach there was still no likelihood that he would sign.

There are two impulses in the brain—the negative and the positive : the negative is that which bids the brain abstain from an action ; the positive, that which bids it act ; and this is true in regard to every human thought, for thought is dependent on the strength, at one and the same time, of each of these powers.

Sometimes by strong influence, one of these two powers of the brain may be destroyed, seldom, indeed, so fully as was now the case with Norris, for but few pass through such an ordeal ; but, in a lesser degree, either the positive or the negative may be overthrown and temporarily banished.

The mind then becomes unequal in its balancing, and the power remaining takes full possession in a determined and incontrovertible thought.

With Norris it was as though he had no ability to sign, for the negative or denying power had taken full possession, banishing all question of reason, and ruling, in the absence of its antidote, with an iron power.

So the torture did not at once urge him to what was desired, and it took many days—days of ever-increasing hideousness—before his sufferings grew to such an extent as to finally restore that part of will which had been as it were for a long time lost to him.

Thus it was that Norris lived for nine days, bearing daily the strokes upon limbs now terrible to look upon by reason of his wounds, before the agony grew so intense in its lasting nature as to cause the gradual return of the positive or acting power into his mind.

That Norris did finally yield was due to the overwhelming influence of the increasing pain which, deadening every thought as no other less sustained torture could have done, allowed the return of the *power to will*.

It was as though the man had forgotten for a time that he might act, and now slowly remembered what was within his ability. One-half of the mind had been virtually dead ; it was now reborn.

Yet he suffered nine days of the bastinado

before this happened, although, as twenty-four hours passed between each application, the condition of his limbs never attained to that awful state in which one may see the criminal's flanks after the rapid succession of thirty or forty strokes.

Shan-min-yu
the captive; he
laconic as had
it clear that No
thousand pound

a second visit to
s short interview,
s, he had made
an order for five

In this he wa
when Norris c
streaks of the dawn.....
morning when he took the paper, and in the half-light wrote again the order to pay the sum demanded by his foe.

As he signed his name once again, a curious impulse overcame him—he had written the first name and half of the second, but something impelled him just then to alter the last letters of his name, and he completed the signature as *William Norland*, not as *William Norris*. Thus, by some inexplicable freak of mind—for, as truly as he wrote, Norris had now intended to give a genuine signature—another that was not genuine went forth as the result of a system of cruelty and torture which had indeed caused the victim to yield, but to yield only to the practice of a new deceit.

When the priests entered the temple that morn-

ing, Norris, filled with the belief that he had now by this writing saved himself from further punishment, held forth the order to him who was nearest.

The priest took it in his hand ; the others crushed curiously around him. A lengthy colloquy ensued. Norris believed that all was well ; that to-day at least the terrible bastinado would not fall.

Even as he thus thought, it was proved to him that he was mistaken, and that the priests were not about to free him from his punishment. That was no part of their design. Could he have understood the words they spoke, he would have learned that to them the signature was but a small thing. It might be given to Shan-min-yuen at some future time ; not yet before their vengeance was complete.

They decided to keep the paper until Shan-min-yuen should ask for it, or until Norris was utterly undone, so that by this means they might still retain the power to carry out their own hellish designs.

The murder and the desecration of the temple were not yet avenged !

When they seized upon him, however, and he saw, notwithstanding that he had signed, that the bastinado was to be used again as it had been used for days, his brain reeled and he cursed aloud.

They took him into the courtyard notwithstanding, and once again listened to his cries and

marked his agony, and for the last time the bastinado fell; for at last his strength broke down, and henceforth he was as one on the point of death for many weeks to come.

Whilst he lay thus, tended by one of the Chinese priests, Sha... ed the note signed by "William

The pri
torture the
and by th
gave the
should No
ey could not further
er to Shan-min-yuen,
his favour. But he
that on no account
lie.

The first summer passed as the winter had passed, without event, for the situation was now much as it had been once before—the same in this, that the order signed by Norris had gone again to England, and that the time passed by unheeded since he was reduced to the lowest ebb of strength; but different in this, that his brain was not so much destroyed now as was his body.

With the falling of the lead the mind had become diseased and weakened so as to influence the body; with the falling of the bastinado the body had grown to influence the mind.

When Shan-min-yuen now obtained this new order for five thousand pounds, he scarcely knew at first how he should use it; for the presentation of the false order in former times might reflect a suspicion upon the strangely written thing now.

in his possession, and the utmost caution had become necessary.

For several weeks he retained it, waiting till he should devise some plan of getting rid of it and obtaining value for the note. Send it to Bonsel he could not, for two reasons: firstly, because of the difficulty he would have in explaining the origin of the false note, and, secondly, because he now perceived more clearly than in the old time the danger incurred in sending forth a cheque with his captive's name appended thereto. He remembered the swallow, too, which had, months ago, been captured in the temple with a message tied to it—a message which bore the words, "Eleventh swallow," thus being evidently one of many such.

Although it was indeed unlikely that any of these birds had reached places where the paper would be understood, there was still a dim chance that such might be the case—a chance which was sufficient to make him cautious. Besides which, some trace of the Englishman's visit might have been left behind him in Tientsin or Shanghai a year ago, and, if so, an order bearing his name, and now produced, would at once create suspicion.

Therefore for a long time Shan-min-yuen kept the paper unused, until finally he had opportunity of sending it to Shanghai and disposing of it through a Chinese merchant in that place.

Before it reached England and came into the hands of Norris's bankers, much had happened;

for every hour the day drew nearer when Chin-chin-wa entered the temple by the power of his pardon, in search of the victim of the Chinese priests.

CHAPTER XX.

THE TORTURE OF THE WHITE BIRD.

FOR many weeks Norris was completely prostrated ; and the priest, nursing him by command from Shan-min-yuen, was sorely tried with the long endurance of this illness.

As Norris, however, once a man of the strongest constitution, had survived the past, so he now survived the present. Well was it for him that his illness was a prolonged one, and that he had sufficient sense to continue to feign weakness whilst in reality convalescent, for this alone saved him for a time from further agonies yet to come.

It is useless to dwell upon this period, for it passed without incident, until at length the priests were assured that Norris was but continuing to feign an illness. Immediately they saw this they set themselves to conceive fresh horrors for the wretched man to endure.

At this very time friends were nearing the prisoner, for Vanscombe and Chin-chin-wa had

entered Pekin, and were searching for him in vain throughout the great city of ruin and decay.

The priests had now hit upon the torture of pouring boiling oil in drops upon the prisoner's nails, fixing both feet and hands firmly in a vice, and dropping 1 upon each nail in
succession,
execution a
from Shan-
system of t could put this into 1 more terrible came
ey put aside their own
is.

Some thi ously Shan-min-yuen
had disposi
given by Norris—a
long time having ~~expired~~, as will be conjectured,
since the date upon which it was written. After sending the order to Shanghai, it occurred to his suspicious mind to wonder whether this second document was indeed true.

Had the torture really forced a true signature from the Englishman, or was this also false like the last? These considerations determined the mandarin to test the point.

Norris had been ill so long that it was unlikely that he would now recollect the name given by him as his signature unless it was his true name; if it was his true name, he would sign in the same manner again under pressure.

If not, he would betray himself. In either case no harm could come of it; for allowing that he had signed truly, then a second order would be but increased gain; and if he had signed wrongly,

THE TORTURE OF THE WHITE BIRD. 309

what now came from him would surely be the true yielding after all that the victim had come through.

Shan-min-yuen, therefore, influenced by these thoughts, bade the priests wait for his device of a torture which should, indeed, force the truth from the prisoner's hand, or at least punish him for the past. He planned a hideous thing ; but whilst he still gloated over his own conception, an event occurred which turned the channel of his thoughts in another direction.

This event was the visit of Chin-chin-wa to the Imperial City—a visit in which Chin-chin-wa, as the other quickly noticed, had taken accurate observance of Shan-min-yuen, whose suspicious mind, being evil, was always on the alert.

As a bad nature is frequently repelled by a true one, so Shan-min-yuen was repelled by Chin-chin-wa, conceiving a subtle hatred for the pardoned exile, the cause of which the mandarin could not explain.

Then had come the meeting in the eating-house, and there Shan-min-yuen's faculties had been set on fire by the discovery that another Englishman was with the man called Chin-chin-wa.

It occurred to him, indeed, for a moment, as Chin-chin-wa had hoped, that all was explainable in the fact of the Englishman's following the footsteps of his friend in adopting Chinese customs and dress ; but suspicion very rapidly superseded this thought.

Shan-min-yuen had taken a dislike to Chin-chin-wa. He found in this meeting a reasonable cause for such dislike, and for the mandarin to speak against the exile surely little justification was required. Chin-chin-wa might be dangerous—that was all that it was necessary to say: for proof he could point to the English friend.

Thereupon he determined to act; for his thoughts, dwelling much upon the torture he had devised for Norris, found hatred for everything English, and new ground for suspicion at every turn.

He was not long in carrying out a part of his wishes by his misrepresentations at court. Chin-chin-wa was dangerous in the city of Pekin, or at least his actions appeared so. So Shan-min-yuen gained his end, yet not fully; for the pardoned exile was not re-exiled, but merely banished from the city of Pekin—that is to say from proximity to the court.

Did Shan-min-yuen merely gratify his whim in this, or had he deeper and more personal suspicions with regard to Chin-chin-wa? It is difficult to say.

It will be remembered that Chin-chin-wa (upon the day previous to that on which he was to leave Pekin owing to his banishment) went to the Temple of Confucius, and that whilst there he heard a cry—which he believed to be an Englishman's cry—come from within.

It was the cry of William Norris; for Shan-

min-yuen was at that moment witnessing his agony within the temple court, whilst the preparations for an awful event were being put in force.

Shan-min-yuen had come quietly to the temple, accompanied only by one servant, who carried a rough cage, concealed by a cloth. Within this cage was a bird, in size and shape something like a parrot, having a long, over-lapping, pointed beak and feathers of pure white.

Shan-min-yuen's words to Norris were few. Yet again he bade him sign truly, and to Norris's reply he turned a deaf ear.

Then, at his command, several of the priests seized and bore the captive into the courtyard, whilst Shan-min-yuen and his attendant followed.

In this courtyard there was now a wooden erection fixed into the ground, close to the foot of the tree which Norris had once known so well. Near this ran the broad paved pathway from temple to temple, upon which the boards had been placed when the bastinado had been administered.

Every memory connected with the place was terrible, and the most terrible was yet to be engraven upon his mind.

He was placed at the foot of the tree, and bound to it in a sitting posture with ropes which surrounded his body and the trunk of the tree. His left arm was bound to his side, not too tightly, lest numbness should set in, but still securely, so that it could not be moved.

His right arm remained partially free ; the reason for this was plain. Paper and ink and pen were placed upon a small board by his side. But Norris knew that it was useless to sign ; he had signed months ago, and the torture had been applied all the same.

His voice rose in wild curses upon Shan-min-yuen. All was vain.

In this position and bound thus to the tree, his legs were of sufficient length to reach to the wooden erection before him, which in a few moments he perceived to be of the nature of the old English stocks ; for his ankles were speedily and securely fixed therein, in such a way that he could not move.

The wood above his feet was in height about fourteen inches ; and could he have seen the further side, he might have wondered that a rod of wood projected at right angles at a little distance above his toes, and that to this rod was affixed a thin chain, so that the whole resembled a perch upon which a bird might sit.

Norris could not see this ; for the height of the board prevented his knowing what was attached to it upon the other side. He was to learn in a more forcible manner, that the aching of his limbs in a painful position was not one hundredth part of that which he must endure.

When they had tied him firmly, and fixed his feet, the attendant who had followed Shan-min-yuen

approached and uncovered what Norris now saw to be a rude cage, with a white bird of large size inside.

His cries had frozen upon his lips ; he became unaware that Shan-min-yuen, his enemy, was near him, or that it lay within his power to take the pen and sign ; for his senses contracted in a hideous aching wonder—a terrible foreboding which overcame him, as his eyes watched every movement of the man who held the cage with the white bird.

The intensity of these moments quickened his life-blood, so that his heart seemed about to burst ; and, though scarcely believing that the awful thing could be true which was suggested to him by what he saw, he drank in every particular of the horror as it came nearer.

The bird was taken from the cage, and its head was covered with a piece of cloth, so that it should not struggle to be free ; then it was brought nearer to the wood which held his feet.

One of the priests bent and assisted the man, and together they bound the bird by the chain around its leg.

Then they released it from their hold, striving to place its feet, as they did so, upon the projecting rod ; the bird, however, did not catch the wood, but in some way momentarily struggled free, and Norris, whose soul had sickened, and whose eyes were staring wildly as though they could not see, felt the touch of its wing upon his bare feet, and

his soul went out from him in that cry which Chin-chin-wa heard outside the walls.

The bird was now placed upon its perch—a perch to which it was confined by a short chain, so that it could not stray—a perch which, placed a little to one side, was just above the floor of Norris's feet, so that the bird, in bending forward to peck at the meat, could, by its long beak, touch the floor.

Had not the man been left him for company?—he might have seen the bird hovering just above the floor, and pecking at his poor bare feet.

This, then, was the secret of Shan-min-yuen's fiendish device. The bird which he had chosen was not of carnivorous nature, nor, under ordinary circumstances, likely to feed upon the human flesh; but, if deprived of food for a lengthy period, the overlapping beak would surely meet in the flesh of the victim's feet.

Many hours would pass before that time—how long it was hard to say, for the bird had been fed that day, and hunger alone would impel it to bend forward and complete a torture which, in anticipation and in duration, held the deepest horror of all.

Shan-min-yuen was satisfied now. He knew that his victim's senses would return ere long, and that long hours, terrible hours, would pass whilst he sat, unable to move, looking upon the white crest of the parrot-like bird and waiting the completion of his doom.

So they left him, with the bird at his feet; and

Norris gradually returned to his senses—to exist through these hours which were the most terrible of all—to live through that night, God knows how, and to greet the dawn in the mockery of his soul.

Thus was it with him on the morning when Vanscombe and Chin-chin-wa set out for the Temple of Confucius; and even as they were nearing the gates, a dull leaden stupor descended upon the wretched man, who alone in that courtyard, with the bird chained at his feet, waited until the last moment of his agony should come.

At last it came; the bird, impelled by hunger, bent down and caught the flesh of Norris's toe in its beak, half wondering, perhaps, if this was food to eat.

The man's shrieks rose through the air, and the bird a second time, and more greedily, bent forward to taste his blood; and as its overlapping beak met in his flesh, a last great cry came from him, and again, as was so often the case, the whole world passed away in darkness!

At that moment the temple-door opened, and Chin-chin-wa looked down upon the scene.

The strong man's heart filled with agony—a pain, which only a strong heart, such as his, can feel in its fulness; and this agony, dwelling in him, yet stilled him, for he had now to act; but it burst from him at a later time, when all was over, and when he answered Vanscombe as one who scarcely

heard, as one who had passed out of a terrible dream—

“I do not know.”

Now he drove it back, and, bounding forward, seized the white bird in his right hand, crushing the life out of it as he tore it from the chain, and casting it from him as a dead thing, killed by the grasp of his powerful hand.

Then he called aloud to the priests who had followed him, and who now stood aghast some way behind, cowed by an anger that is seldom known in man. And he commanded them to undo the bonds, and to release the poor feet, one of which was dripping with blood.

They obeyed him silently. He had come to them bearing the command from Shan-min-yuen—

“PERMIT AND GIVE HONOUR TO CHIN-CHIN-WA.”

For what else should he come but in connection with the prisoner, who was now to be unbound?

Shan-min-yuen had himself said,

“I shall return on the morrow.”

By chance he had not yet come. To the priests it was manifest that Chin-chin-wa had come instead, and that him they were commanded to obey.

Slowly, for the bonds were carefully knotted, they released Norris: and at length he lay, free but senseless, upon the ground.

THE TORTURE OF THE WHITE BIRD. 317

Chin-chin-wa took him in his arms, and thus bearing him, passed out of the court and through the temples until he reached the outer gate, and there he left the priests and went out free ; for they had seen his anger, and were afraid.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE RACE FOR THE TUNGCHOW GATE

THE remaining narrative lies in the hand
Herbert Vanscombe :—

Startled as I was by the appearance o
wasted frame and the drawn features of the
borne by Chin-chin-wa, I was but half cons
for some moments of the sensations which
came me.

"I do not know," Chin-chin-wa had said.

I heard, and yet did not seem to hear. Co
be possible that there was any doubt?

Could it be that he had used the power
pardon in vain; that there were others b
William Norris confined within the temple?

I had spoken the question more in ago
mind than in expectation of a reply, and
answer had been, "I do not know."

A tissue of confused ideas flashed acros
as Chin-chin-wa seemed to immediately re
himself. The crowd around us pressed curio

THE RACE FOR THE TUNGCHOW GATE. 319

for indeed the incident was one which might well arouse their interest.

"We have still time!" Chin-chin-wa cried, pushing onwards, as he spoke, to the palanquins, whose bearers at his command hastened to their places. An acute pain shot through my heart.

Everything became clear to me again; it was a time to act, not to delay, for every instant the sun was mounting higher in the heavens, and every instant nearer and nearer drew the hour of noon.

And we were still far from the Tungchow gate.

The events that I have endeavoured to describe minutely, had taken place so rapidly, that in a few seconds from his exit from the temple Chin-chin-wa had placed his burden silently within his palanquin, which was now raised aloft. He then turned to me, pointing to the second palanquin which still lay on the ground.

I understood and obeyed. To Chin-chin-wa the terrible heat of noon was of no importance; for me it was a thing to avoid.

I took my seat; the other bearers had preceded me, and, with a number of the crowd following in their train, were already moving at a sharp trot over the dusty and uneven ground.

Chin-chin-wa, with long steps, kept alongside the palanquin, in front, moving with an easy and swinging stride.

For a moment it seemed to me that I was now

by some freak of fortune to be left behind at the last ; but, as I half conceived the thought, I felt myself raised in the air, and knew a second later that my bearers were carrying me onwards as rapidly as those who went before.

All now depended upon haste. Well did I know this ; and I could hear Chin-chin-wa's voice urging on the men who bore the victim whom he had saved, and calling upon them, as I judged, to expend the full measure of their strength.

A Pekin palanquin is a heavy article. Unlike the chairs of Canton or Foochow, it is weighty and cumbersome, and more suited to slow and dignified progression than to anything of the nature of haste.

The mandarin of Pekin is expected to exhibit full dignity when he appears in his palanquin in the streets ; and we had taken upon ourselves to enact the part of mandarins prior to Chin-chin-wa's entrance to the Temple of Confucius.

Now, however, there was every necessity to cast aside lethargic movement, and to hasten onwards ; for the Tungchow gate was yet some distance off, and the hour of noon was near at hand. But although haste was to us of the greatest moment, it was not so with the bearers of the palanquin, and my heart ached in wild rebellion as we moved onwards at a pace which, whilst moderately fast, yet seemed snail-like to me.

Should we reach the gate in time ? That question

was now uppermost, and a vague prayer went up from my heart to the skies, where the sun, which still moved onwards, every instant brought us nearer to our doom.

I have said *our* doom, for my fate was now bound up with Chin-chin-wa's; if he fell, I too would fall by his side; if need be, we should resist the enemy side by side, and, standing together, be overpowered and foully killed, whilst William Norris would also share our doom. But the occasion had not as yet arisen, for we were not yet lost; we still moved onwards, whilst clouds of dust surrounded us so that I could scarcely distinguish the palanquin in front or see the tall form of Chin-chin-wa.

Was this strange wasted man indeed the Norris whom we sought, or had Chin-chin-wa made some mistake, and borne the wrong person from the confines of the temple walls?

If indeed it were William Norris, was he now dead?—for his face had hung back lifelessly, and one foot had been red with blood.

Through what had the wretched victim passed? What had Chin-chin-wa seen and heard within the temple? Had we, or had we not, laboured in vain?

I looked at my watch: the hour was close at hand. I could not tell, on account of the dust, whether we had approached near to our destination; but I feared that there was yet a long way to be traversed.

I sat thus, watch in hand, whilst the palanquin swayed and jolted onwards, for some minutes I should think, when of a sudden I perceived that Chin-chin-wa had fallen back and was now beside me.

I knew that the end was near.

"What is it
my side, whi
able, since the

he moved on foot by
rd as well as I was
d from side to side.

"The hour
crowd who fo
Noon is alm
time."

e the reply. "The
oon know the truth.
l we shall not be in

"What is to be done?" I questioned hurriedly.

"Will you run for it?" was his rejoinder.

"Yes," I answered, something of the old Eton spirit coming over me even then.

"Then dismount quickly. Shan-min-yuen has carried out his threat; the crowd behind, which you cannot see, is not large, but some of his men are among it. I am tracked down, watched on all sides. They have followed us all the morning. I saw them when I left the temple; they must have followed us before that. Quick!—it is our only chance. We must run."

All this was so rapidly spoken that scarcely a moment was lost.

"But what of Norris?" I cried, as my palanquin, at Chin-chin-wa's command, was instantly lowered upon the ground.

"We have not far to go," was the quick reply.
"I shall save that man. Come!"

And at the word he set off at full speed ; and I, casting a glance over my shoulder, girt my Chinese garments about me, as well as I was able, and immediately followed. As I did so, I began to realise the task which I had undertaken, for I could understand now, how it was that on the heavy, thickly laden road the bearers had failed to progress as quickly as we would have had them do.

Chin-chin-wa was right ; we were followed. The mob which had formerly collected round us was well-nigh scattered, and had fallen away ; but I perceived at a glance that there were a number of men who, keeping some distance behind, and apparently forming part of a jabbering and inquisitive crowd, were yet far more likely to be the followers and dependents of Shan-min-yuen than impelled by mere curiosity to follow us.

It must not be understood that we were in unsought places ; our progress at an unusual rate was indeed sufficient to attract attention ; and in passing carts and camels and many conveyances our way had never, from the time of leaving the temple, been uninterrupted, notwithstanding that in the great width of the streets it is seldom troublesome to avoid the numerous vehicles which form the traffic of such a city as Pekin.

But although many had turned to gaze upon us

and to follow Chin-chin-wa with the eye till duly satisfied that nothing was to be gained by it, few had been added to those who followed us; and those who had must have been more influenced by that feeling which impels everyone to join in a crowd than from ~~curiosity~~ to what we were about to do.

A few, however,
fastly behind,
were chiefly the

had kept steadily
I now understood,
han-min-yuen.

For the rest
in the headlong
and the atmosphere
year is not such as to call into energy the latent
curiosity of those who pass along dust-laden roads,
with the overpowering heat of the sun beating
upon their heads.

Now that we were leaving our palanquins the case was altered, for the spectacle presented by two men, richly dressed in mandarin garb, flying on foot through clouds of dust stirred by their every step, must certainly attract popular attention in a very marked degree.

This was the first difficulty. The second was William Norris, or the man whom we had secured as being William Norris.

Was he to be left to follow in the palanquin where he now lay?

As I rapidly questioned this whilst I started upon a race whose length I did not yet know—

a race for life as against death—I saw that Chin-chin-wa had made up upon the first palanquin and that its bearers had already lowered it upon the ground.

I am unable clearly to convey the rapidity of all that now occurred.

Chin-chin-wa, who had been some yards in advance of me, had stopped the palanquin. I was instantly by its side; he shouted out to me, "On, on! I shall be after you;" and I did as he directed, knowing that he was more fleet of foot than I, and that every moment must be saved by me, and every effort expended to attain to anything like speed, upon the Pekin roads. I knew also that all lay in his hands; that he must guide at this time, not I, and I did not hesitate a moment, but passed him without looking back, and continued to run as quickly as lay within my power along the road which lay before me.

Some moments must have passed whilst I ran thus, conscious that danger was every moment coming more near us—for something told me that, as we went, we were now actually pursued—when I became aware of hard breathing behind me, and knew that Chin-chin-wa was overtaking me, and would shortly take the lead. Perhaps this thought influenced me to unconsciously slacken speed, for a second or two later he was by my side, and then, without a word, took a position in front of, but a little to one side of me.

My eyes, which had been fixed ahead with the determination that our goal must be reached, turned towards him ; as they did so, a great wave of emotion, of admiration, of manly love—call it what you will—overcame me ; I instantly saw the cause of 's short and hard breathing.

He was carrying the body of the man whom he had notwithstanding the temple, and yet, full speed, whi ed forth in the hour of need.

As I saw this, and as my senses half grasped the reality of the man's heroism—a heroism apparent now, when every moment might save his life—a heroism which was virtually sacrificing that life for another's sake—I felt a touch of his iron strength enter me, and nerve me to fresh exertion ; if Chin-chin-wa could do this thing, surely I, too, might, at least, succeed in keeping pace with him. Shouts had arisen behind us—shouts which were explained to me in the aftertime by Chin-chin-wa, for they meant this—"Chase him to the gates, and kill the exile who can ;" and, as I heard the cry, I knew that the hour of noon had come, and that Chin-chin-wa's life was no longer his own.

Still we out-distanced those who followed, and some who turned at the cry had not the time to step in front of us before we had passed and left them in pursuit. In the traffic, greater as we

neared the gate, there was a certain amount of safety for us, in that those who were far in front did not perceive us, or grasp the meaning of the cry behind, until we were near them, and the gate was now close at hand.

We were now in this position : Chin-chin-wa a yard in front of me ; I, a little to one side, behind him on the left.

Suddenly danger in its most terrible form faced us : two men sprang out to oppose our progress.

All my strength rose within me. "Fall back !" I shouted desperately to Chin-chin-wa, almost as we were upon them. Chin-chin-wa dropped a step, so that I passed him and, with clenched fist, I struck them in succession, with the rapidity of a madman's frenzy, full in the face. Our speed did not slacken—we passed on.

"The gate !" I shouted ; "on, on !"—for it was there before us, and, as I perceived it, I seemed to grasp, for the first time, what Shan-min-yuen might have done.

The gate was open—it might have been closed.

As my voice broke from me, Chin-chin-wa was again by my side ; the foot of the man he carried just touched me—happily no more.

The gate was free ; the road almost clear. All danger was behind us, unless some providence intervened.

A great tumult arose behind us. My senses seemed to leave me. I seemed to enter at full

speed into a dark pit ; for the great gateway contracted, so it seemed to me, as we approached.

Darkness enveloped me—and then—a sudden light.

We had passed through the Tungchow gate.

• • • • •

Near the Pekin gates the roads are paved on either side of the wall with huge slabs of unevenly laid stone. We had passed over some of these and were now outside the walls.

When I knew that we were saved from the greatest of all our perils, my strength, from the terrible strain placed upon it, completely left me, and I fell forwards ; but Chin-chin-wa saved me. Half loosening his grip upon the man whose form he carried, he stretched out his left arm and gave me momentary support.

Notwithstanding this, I sank upon the ground.

Those who had pursued us were upon us at this instant ; but I heard a loud voice, giving, as it were, a command above me, as it had done in strangely similar circumstances once before, and, glancing upwards upon Chin-chin-wa's face, I saw that it was he who spoke.

Never shall I forget his face as I saw it then, set with the great beauty of an iron strength which admits no weakness ; and yet I knew that the endurance of the man was well nigh spent.

He was marble pale ; yet even now he restrained the weakness which was upon him, his lips did not quiver, and his breath seemed to come as always, as though he had suffered nothing in that desperate race for life.

He faced them—a great crowd of bloodthirsty, maddened brutes ; wolves balked of their prey ! It was a moment of intense danger. Would they furiously disregard his words ? No ; the command had a power I could scarcely credit ; and that power which protected him, protected Norris and myself. He faced them—and his commanding attitude and words enforced obedience, for in his hand he held his pardon—his life was once again protected by the Imperial power.

Chin-chin-wa now loosened his hold upon the form which he bore in his arms. As soon as I was sufficiently recovered, I rose and looked around me.

Shan-min-yuen's attendants had apparently disappeared, for the crowd kept back at Chin-chin-wa's command ; and then gradually, so I imagined, must have come questions from one to the other as to what had been the reason for the pursuit ; and so they slowly gathered in knots observing us ; but danger, for the present at least, was past.

Gradually I felt that my strength was returning to me. Chin-chin-wa had not yet moved, being, like myself, exhausted. Thus some minutes passed, whilst the crowd circled round us inquiringly, until at last Chin-chin-wa spoke.

"We must move on," he said to me, "as soon as you are able. The ponies are not far off. We must get away from here. Shan-min-yuen will not be long in setting out upon the pursuit; they expected him at the temple every moment."

"But," I said, "what protects you now?"

"Not from [redacted] and his men," he answered quickly. "I think he will hesitate to pursue us at such a time. That alone is enough. And if my [redacted] enough to protect me, I would not need to meet him as man to man."

I did not answer. I was still endeavouring to recall my strength, and, as in moments of intense excitement one will sometimes do most trivial things, my next action was a strange one; I lifted my Chinese garb, and looked at my watch as it lay in the pouch I wore at my waist.

It was exactly twelve minutes past the hour of noon.

Chin-chin-wa bent over Norris.

"He still lives," he said. "Thank God!" Then he sought to raise the body in his arms once more. "Come," he said to me, "a little way; courage!"

He was right; we were not yet safe.

Chin-chin-wa moved on: I made an effort, and followed him, and by the time we reached the inn where the ponies awaited us, in charge of the old

THE RACE FOR THE TUNGCHOW GATE. 331

curio-dealer, I felt that I was ready for fresh exertion.

Such of the crowd as had followed us we now left behind us upon the road, whilst we entered the yard of the Chinese inn. Our aged host expressed his delight at our arrival, in words to Chin-chin-wa and in gestures to me; for he had feared that we were lost, since we had passed the appointed hour. The ponies were ready for us, and little time was spent in further preparation.

Our intention had been to ride to Tientsin—that is to say, to make the whole journey on horse-back.

Now, as I discovered, this was to be altered.

Chin-chin-wa had determined upon a better course, yet one which still presented obstacles and difficulties of its own—that of going by river to Tientsin. Our future movements he laid before me rapidly, as we rested for a few minutes before mounting the ponies which were ready for us.

It was highly probable that Shan-min-yuen would give early pursuit, because he had been expected at the temple; and on his arrival there he would discover the absence of his captive.

His attendants, meantime, would return to say that they had pursued Chin-chin-wa, the exile, through the streets, accompanied by his English friend, and that as he went he had carried a man whom he had brought from the Temple of Confucius.

Certainly, with this information, Shan-min-yuen would quickly discern the truth.

Our position, then, was fraught with danger, and although any little delay had been counterbalanced in a measure by the great haste in which we had left the city it now became an urgent necessity to be well in upon the Tung-chia, the river, and th

and here it proved -chin-wa had fixed r it was nearest to t now strive to gain. nts we should then ward at an unusual should best be able

By means of induce the sa speed, and by to gain safety, for Norris, in his present condition, would certainly be unable to ride upon horseback unless held firmly in his seat.

This task was to be ours, as it was, to Tungchow.

Norris—if it were Norris, as I still doubted—was now dimly conscious, for the great shaking which his frame must have endured whilst Chin-chin-wa carried him over the uneven ground at full speed had had a beneficial rather than an injurious effect under the circumstances, and we knew now with certainty that, though terribly weakened, he was recovering.

But it was no time to attempt to question him.

Chin-chin-wa poured a little samshu* down his throat, and both he and I also swallowed some of this; but, further, we treated Norris as if he were

* Chinese spirit.

a dead thing, dealing with him as though he were unconscious still ; for we had the power to act, whilst from him it was totally gone.

We placed him upon one of the ponies and tied him to it with ropes, as firmly as we were able, in a position which, whilst irksome, was necessary ; for, as we rode on either side, we could give him but small support, as well we knew.

Chin-chin-wa then mounted his steed ; I followed suit, and, leading the third pony between us, and half-supporting the form it bore, we passed together out upon the road.

As we did so, the old Chinaman, our late host in Pekin, came after us, crying curiously in the Chinese way, as he ran by the side of Chin-chin-wa.

Then I knew for the first time that the old man must have truly loved Chin-chin-wa, and that they parted now, as they had parted seventeen years ago, knowing that only by some freak of fate could they ever meet again.

A softer look than I had ever seen upon Chin-chin-wa's face overspread it now.

He spoke some words ; I do not know what they were, for I could not ask, but I know that they were words of farewell worthy of Chin-chin-wa, and as the old man heard them he silently fell back.

From this moment our every effort and endeavour was towards speed. But even with speed,

given that we reached the Peiho in good time, and far in advance of those who would, as we anticipated, start in the pursuit, there was this possibility yet before us—we might, even now, be unable to secure a boat in time.

CHAPTER XXII.

HE CLUNG TO ME WHEN HE WAS DEAD.

STRANGE as it may seem, the sun's heat, in this hour of trial, did not affect me, and I felt no injurious effects later; perhaps my head was sufficiently protected by my mandarin hat of round shape and of fine straw, or the great excitement served in some unknown way as an antidote to the power of the sun's rays.

As we rode onwards, constantly urging our steeds to fresh exertion, and keeping the pony, upon which Norris was tied, between us as we went, a new fear came to me.

"Suppose," I said, "that one of our ponies breaks down from this haste; what then?"

Chin-chin-wa answered me at once—

"Face trouble when it comes!"

After that we did not speak; for our flight was of that nature which called upon us to expend our strength of mind and body upon pushing onwards; and, cumbered as we were with the man and horse between us, we were sorely tried indeed.

I do know how long we were upon the road, but at last I saw that we were entering a great village, and soon, passing through its streets, unheeding those who gathered in a crowd behind us, we came to a vast open space, and I saw sails and masts at a little distance.

We had

Here, up
of Tungch
ing me to
bound him

By the ti
few words i...

a river in the village
Chin-chin-wa direct-
on the ropes which
or a boat.

He returned, and in a
well. "

Thankful, indeed, were we to be able to proceed immediately, for if we were right in our conclusions Sham-min-yuen must have been already nearing us; and although I had upon my person two revolvers, and Chin-chin-wa no doubt carried, as always, his deadly knife, I had come to know enough of China and the Chinese to perceive how useless would have been our resistance. It was a most fortunate thing that till this time the arms which I had brought with me to the north had not been called into requisition, for a single drop of blood spilled might easily have sealed our fate.

Scarce half-an-hour later we had started on our journey down the Peiho to Tientsin.

Our progress was rapid. Chin-chin-wa had secured a triple crew, and of these men a number went upon the bank dragging the boat down stream by means of ropes tied to the mast.

What came of our ponies I do not know ; they, as with our baggage in Pekin, were left behind. We had no time to think of them.

The boat upon which we now were was a house-boat ; so termed by the Europeans in China, since it carries a wooden house, forming a cabin where the travellers may repose.

We did not speak much at this time, Chin-chin-wa and I. We were equally wearied, and anxiety held us in iron bonds.

Slowly night began to fall upon us ; but our speed slackened little, we were to travel throughout the night without stoppage ; and, as darkness fell, a great sense of peace and security and total release from fear came upon me, and I fell asleep.

When I awoke, a feeble lamp was burning in the little cabin where I lay, and I saw that Norris was beside me. Something assured me now, as I looked on him, that it could be none other than he.

Sleep had come upon him, too, so I judged ; his breast moved gently, and his eyes were closed.

I looked closely at his face ; it was an English face, I could have sworn it, and yet so drawn that I knew not why I judged it to be English, I had never seen an English face like his.

Upon his half-shaven head I noticed several black spots near the forehead, round and evenly marked, and wondered what these were.

Then I looked out upon the night, and distinguished clearly in the light of the moon the figure

of Chin-chin-wa sitting in the prow gazing forwards—so it seemed to me—as though ever upon the watch.

I stepped out beside him. He, too, had fallen under nature's charm, for he slept sitting at his self-chosen post.

I did not
were charmed
through
followed him
the men who

the sleepers; my ears
plash of the waters
wing, and my eyes
tinguishable forms of
n the bank.

Night has come
those who ...
an ecstasy of stillness, and a delightful peace falls
upon the world and subdues the troubles of man.

Far above us, in a sky peopled with its million stars, shone the peerless moon—not in its full glory, but yet beautiful in its silver light.

Beneath me, within a foot or two of my hand, was the sluggish river, whose dinginess was not observable now that the night had come.

On either side lay the long, low banks, and in front of us the curve which the men with the ropes were straining even now to round.

For a little while my senses drank their full of the restful glory of an Eastern night, so that trouble passed from me, and I wandered into a land of dreams.

But lasting peace is not to be found on earth; the human mind seeks ever after strife; and slowly

my thoughts returned to all that was, and had been, till I fell into vain conjecture as to how it had come that we had so far escaped the pursuit of Shan-min-yuen.

Chin-chin-wa had told me that the priests had believed him to be the mandarin's messenger. I knew also in what position he had found the man he saved ; how a white bird had been chained near his feet, and that this accounted for the blood, since the bird had torn the poor flesh with its hideous beak ; moreover, he had told me that even whilst he waited till the victim should be unbound, he knew that at any moment Shan-min-yuen might arrive, for the priests expected him, and had he arrived all would assuredly have been lost.

I could imagine no situation more fraught with danger than must have been that of Chin-chin-wa whilst he stood within the temple, at a time when his whole soul must have been on fire with mingled feelings on discovering Norris with the white bird at his feet.

Only now, as I sat resting quietly, could I picture to myself the scene ; when I had listened to Chin-chin-wa's rapid tale, the sense which man possesses, which may drink in fear and horror, was, in my case, then already filled by the presence of the dangers still around us.

What must not the months gone by have been to Norris !

For his story I must wait, perhaps for many,

many days. But it was something to hope that the mystery would be cleared eventually, and that a reason would be forthcoming for all the protracted torture Norris had endured. Thus was I musing when Chin-chin-wa moved. He turned towards me.

"Have y
sentinel, yo
think I sho
saved us ; w

"And wh
are far from
at ease when we ,

ked. "I am a bad
er had been near I
ed. The night has
tsin!"

d. "In Tientsin we
part, I shall only feel

" You are right ; that is our only safety. I too feel that we have not passed through all our dangers. Shan-min-yuen will know that we have gone to the coast ; if he pursues us by river, we have a chance ; but he may, by rapidly pushing overland, intercept us. All depends upon the hour of his setting out from Pekin. If we reach Tientsin in safety I shall pay these men to take us to the coast, unless by chance there is an English vessel at Tientsin ready for immediate departure. We must even risk going to sea in this cockle-shell : I believe it is the safest way."

"But," I queried, "are there not enough English-men in Tientsin to protect us?"

"By no means," was his reply. "You have seen the settlement, and know it to be a small one : we cannot estimate the strength of our foes. We are

HE CLUNG TO ME WHEN HE WAS DEAD. 341

in the land of the Chinese race, and our lives may pay the forfeit for what we have done. Do not think that now, after the man has been robbed of his prey, and baulked as he has been, that anything will stand in the way of his revenge. He will be like an infuriated and senseless beast. His own destruction will be a small thing, if he first compass mine. I am glad that this is so, for now, if we meet, we are as man to man. Nothing stands between us: I may justly destroy this wicked man! But," he continued in a lighter tone, "our lives must stand apart from those of others as far as may be. We must not risk many lives to save three; the settlement must not be called upon, else every European life in Northern China hangs upon a thread. You must know now how powerless the legation in Pekin would have proved, had we gone to them for aid: a few men against a nation. What is the result? They are brave; what does it matter? The Chinese are pitiless and cruel."

"Then you propose to proceed to the coast in this boat, and to avoid entering Tientsin?"

"If it be possible, it would be the wisest plan. We shall attempt it."

"And when shall we pass Tientsin?" I questioned.

"Early to-morrow night I hope; perhaps before darkness falls."

For a long time we sat talking. There was

much which each had to say—much that was repeated yet seemed new, and held a special interest in view of the dangers we had faced together, which had now bound us in a bond of union of the truest kind.

Hours in silence I he

then in a momentary
e little cabin.

"Hush!" last."

Norris who speaks at

I went followed me.

d Chin-chin-wa fol-

By the fire lamp we saw that he was awake; that sleep had entirely removed the cloud, and that the man was now conscious and could speak.

It was then that I fully perceived his piteous condition; it must have been a long time since he had tasted food, but other causes had contributed to his emaciation.

Chin-chin-wa poured some samshu down his throat, and this seemed to revive his strength, for he asked us in a strange, uneven voice, now hoarse, and now sunk into a whisper, if we could give him food.

I had nothing suitable to give. But Chin-chin-wa had been more provident; for, whilst I had slept, he had had some soup prepared, and although it had cooled, it was appetising and nourishing.

Norris swallowed a little, as I held him up, whilst

[REDACTED] - [REDACTED]

HE CLUNG TO ME WHEN HE WAS DEAD. 343

Chin-chin-wa placed the basin to his lips. Then he sank back exhausted, and Chin-chin-wa said to me—

“Leave him. Come! He is too weak to speak
We must come again.”

So we went forth again into the night air.

The first of the dawn was approaching; but neither of us slept.

Slowly the new day was born, and slowly the morning came and passed. No incident occurred, though we were ever on the outlook lest our enemies should appear upon the bank.

Several times we fed Norris; but it was past noon before I ventured to sit beside him and speak to him.

By that time he was able to sit up, and seemed in a fair way of regaining something of his shattered strength.

“Norris,” I had said, addressing him for the first time, “you are safe now.”

He was silent for a moment, and then in his strange weak voice,

“How do you know my name?” he said.

“The swallow brought it me,” was my reply, “months and months ago.”

As I spoke, he burst into tears; and I do not know if it was weakness alone which caused him to weep, for the vision of the beautiful bird, weary and worn with its flight across the seas, as it had come to me in Brussels months before, recurred to

me, and my own heart was full, so that I could not say more.

We neared Tientsin at last. We now paid off some of the men who had toiled for us upon the bank ; for, as we neared the city, the river broadened and deepened, so that the oars alone were of use, and our boat was not large enough to hold all the men whom we had hired.

It was at this time that Chin-chin-wa, who had been speaking to the men at the oars, turned to me, as I stood beside him, wondering what was the matter, and said bitterly—

“They refuse to take us past Tientsin.”

“Refuse !” I said, astounded. “Why ?”

“Because,” he answered, “they see the possibility of unlimited reward ; they have fathomed the truth that every hour is of importance to us.”

“But give them the reward—anything they ask,” I cried.

“You are wrong,” he answered quietly. “I have promised them the reward—great reward—after we pass Tientsin ; but we must not carry out that half-made bargain. We must leave this boat at Tientsin.”

“Why so ?” I asked ; for I was puzzled.

“This is the reason,” was his reply. “I have promised them great sums if they will agree to take us to the river’s mouth. They have agreed to that because they think the greater reward lies after the passing of Tientsin, and with that in view they will

expend their strength so that we may pass the city. Then they have us in their power : they may refuse for fabulous sums to move on, and much time may be lost. At every bend in the river their avarice may demand fresh bribes. We cannot afford to risk our lives on such a system of flight."

"Then," I asked, "what is to be done ?"

"I scarcely know. We must, I think, go to your German acquaintance. Norris and you must wait there whilst I arrange for a steamer, or procure any river conveyance possible to take us to the sea."

"But why to Bonsel's ?"

"His house, in my mind, will be the last to which Shan-min-yuen will go ; for the mandarin will not be likely to visit his friend when upon such a dastardly affair as this."

I perceived the strength of his reasoning, and yet revolted at the idea of going to Bonsel's house.

I asked him if we could not rather remain together without separating. But he answered me that it would soon be night, and that, with Norris to support from place to place, our chance of securing a steamer or boat might be gone, for we could not act rapidly when thus encumbered.

We now looked to the possibility of leaving Tientsin before dawn.

That Bonsel could have had no hand in Norris's capture I still believed. But supposing that we

had judged him too leniently in this, what then? I questioned Chin-chin-wa.

"I shall be with you," was his answer, "when you first go to Bonsel's; if there is guilt, we shall know it instantly. Trust to me."

Evening was falling as we moved down the widening river, past the outskirts of Tientsin; past Chinese soldiers at play upon the banks, swinging from arm to arm, in graceful movement, great weights, which they passed from one to the other, and caught in curious positions, which must have strained their powerful muscles to the full.

Others, again, were busy upon convict-work upon the river banks.

The whole river teemed with life, with curious boats and junks, and the air was filled with a myriad of human sounds, which rose alike from the water and the land.

We reached the bridge of boats; it was open, and we passed through. Scarcely had we done so, when Chin-chin-wa stood up and commanded the rowers loudly to put to land. But it seemed that they refused to obey; for a disturbance arose, since the men had expected greater reward when Tientsin was passed.

Chin-chin-wa turned to me.

"Your revolvers!" he said.

I took them from my belt and handed them to him. He took one in either hand, and, pointing them to the men, spoke in a voice of command.

For a moment they swerved ; I thought that this threat was sufficient ; and I was glad, for I feared the result of the pistol explosion at such a time. But whether it be that the men were ignorant of the deadly nature of the weapons held by Chin-chin-wa, or that they felt security in the presence of the life around them, I know not ; but certain it is that they did not obey, but rather rowed the harder down the stream.

The oars—of which, whilst the men tracked upon the bank, one had been used as rudder—were now employed by the men in front ; and it may be imagined that our boat was fully manned (even for its size, which was larger than the ordinary house-boat of its kind), when it is stated that there were five Chinamen in front, thus making—with ourselves three—a complement of eight on board.

The Chinamen were crowded together, and yet managed to guide the boat.

They did not obey Chin-chin-wa, but shouted to one another instead, and we moved on rapidly down stream.

Chin-chin-wa did not fire. Threats being of no avail, he handed me my weapons.

"These are useless ; it must be quietly done. Wait here ! Do not fire : leave all to me. There is only one way now."

With these words he seized in his hand a short pole of wood which was fixed upright in a hole upon the deck near the stern where we stood. It

was loose in its socket, for it had acted as a part of the helm—an oar in the earlier part of our journey having been tied to it with rope.

It came easily to his hand, and, taking it, he moved quickly forwards along the side of the boat till he came to where the men sat in the prow, beyond the little cabin upon deck.

I obeyed him, and waited, though I longed to follow; but as it was, I did right.

The Chinamen instantly knew that danger was come; they stood up as Chin-chin-wa reached them, and two of them drew in their oars. He did not give them a moment for thought.

Wielding his block of wood with herculean strength, he knocked the men over like ninepins, striking at their heads and sending three of them, as he did so, over the little vessel's side.

I had scarcely time to think of his intention before all this was accomplished.

Three of the men were in the water, two of them being apparently stunned, for their bodies had sunk.

The third was half swimming with the tide. Of the two men still left, one must have been senseless, for Chin-chin-wa raised his body and cast it over; and then when I thought all was at an end the worst came, for the last man, who cannot have been much injured, suddenly rose and precipitated himself upon Chin-chin-wa with all his force.

Chin-chin-wa staggered ; then, to my horror, he stepped back, and the next instant, with the Chinaman's arms about him, he too fell into the stream, whilst the boat heeled so that I thought it was about to upset.

The waters closed then, without a sound, upon him and his desperate foe.

I could do nothing. My eyes were fixed upon the spot where the two had disappeared, as the boat swiftly passed it.

I was now alone with Norris. I am not a strong swimmer ; and even had I been so I could have done nothing, since both men had disappeared.

Could Chin-chin-wa swim ? The question in its full agony occurred to me. I had never heard him speak of being able to do so.

Moments of intense anxiety passed over me, as I gazed powerlessly at the dull water, whilst the boat drifted on. Of a sudden I heard a splash. I turned.

"Thank God !" burst from me, "all is well."

Chin-chin-wa had risen to the surface in front of me, carried on by some under-current.

I saw, on the instant, that he was a powerful swimmer ; and, hastening forwards, reached out an oar—he caught it, and in a few seconds more stood again by my side.

"I had my knife ; but the man clung to me," he said between long-drawn breaths, "even when he was dead."

I turned to the cabin as he spoke, it suddenly struck me now that Chin-chin-wa was safe, that it was strange that Norris had given no cry.

I found that he had fainted, probably in an excess of fear.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FAREWELL TO CHIN-CHIN-WA.

HALF an hour after this we stood upon the shore. Chin-chin-wa and I had rowed the boat to land so soon as we were able ; and now, supporting Norris between us, we strove to hasten to Bonsel's house.

It was, indeed, slow progression, since Norris, now assured of his safety, and recalled again to life, could yet, from his weakness, scarcely place foot upon the ground.

It was dark by the time we reached the settlement.

At length we stood upon the threshold of Bonsel's house. He was dining when we arrived, and happily, alone. His amazement upon seeing us knew no bounds.

From our reception, and from his manner, I knew at once that we had done a grievous wrong in, even for a moment, suspecting the honest man.

Bonsel had had no hand in the affair. Overwhelming us with questions, he placed his house at

our disposal ; indeed, his hospitality seemed likely to involve a serious loss of time.

Chin-chin-wa, however, soon set this right. Norris had been placed upon the sofa, being again thoroughly exhausted. Bonsel had handed me my letters, and was questioning us when Chin-chin-wa interrupted him.

"Forgive my interrupting you, Mr. Bonsel—this is the whole case. Your Chinese friend, Shan-min-yuen, is the man who has held Norris a captive."

Bonsel started back.

"It cannot be !" he exclaimed.

"In the Temple of Confucius !" continued Chin-chin-wa coldly. "It is true. We are pursued by him now. There must be no time lost. Is there an English steamer in Tientsin ?"

"Yes, one was arriving to-day ; but it is here for several days."

"It must leave Tientsin to-night. Mr. Vanscombe will explain all. I must hasten to the river. The steamer's crew must be collected, and we must sail to-night."

Bonsel, I think, understood that a crisis was at hand.

"Shan-min-yuen will come to me," he said.

"If he does so, you must conceal your guests. You are the Chinaman's friend ; he will believe you. They are safer in this house than in any other in Tientsin."

With these words Chin-chin-wa hastened to the door and left us in the German's house.

Alone with Bonsel, I rapidly detailed all that had occurred, Norris listening eagerly as I spoke. Bonsel seemed to doubt the truth, for he could believe no ill of his friend, yet he knew Shan-min-yuen to be the father of the Confucian priests.

"But for what cause," he asked at length, "could Shan-min-yuen, my friend, have done this?"

The answer came unexpectedly from Norris, clearing all that had been to me also a matter of doubt.

"I gave two false cheques to the mandarin," he said.

At the word, Bonsel started and turned pale.

"What is wrong?" I asked hurriedly.

"This," he answered. "I received one false order from Shan-min-yuen. It was returned from the English bank. I understood nothing; for the name was otherwise—not Norris."

"And the second? Norris says there were two!" I asked eagerly; "what of it?"

"I am knowing nothing of it," was his answer; "it has not come here."

"You have not written to Shan-min-yuen of our visit to Pekin?" I inquired anxiously.

"No!" was his reply.

Notwithstanding that we had much to mutually

question and investigate, a weary time ensued ; for the hours slipped by and Chin-chin-wa did not reappear. Bonsel was of opinion that Chin-chin-wa was right ; that if all this was true, which even yet he scarcely believed, Shan-min-yuen would not come to his house when bent upon such a pursuit, and that, should he do so, we could easily be concealed. We reckoned without taking into account the strange chances of fate.

It seemed to me that years had intervened since last I had been in this room ; for time is, in the mind, measured by events. Had we indeed reached safety now ? Were we, as Chin-chin-wa had conjectured, safe in Bonsel's house ?

My personal feeling was that, till we left Tientsin, danger still hung over us. We had come quickly, it is true, but Shan-min-yuen must have followed ; and if he had done so, these hours that were now passing might bring him upon us still.

We had had a good start, in that Shan-min-yuen had not known of our flight, or guessed the possibility of our saving the prisoner till it was done ; but inwardly I felt that the mandarin goaded to pursue us was even now approaching us ; for my mind created a certainty of this from doubt.

I could not talk freely to the German, my nerves were too highly strung.

We had the present still to face ; we might talk of the past when all was done. In this state of

mind I waited anxiously for Chin-chin-wa to reappear, and Norris, I think, shared my anxiety, though he was too weak I fancy to feel as acutely as I.

Midnight came upon us. We were now all alike filled with anxious thought, owing to the prolonged absence of Chin-chin-wa, when he burst in upon us wildly, shouting as he did so—

“Quick! Shan-min-yuen is here. He must have come by road. I met one of his men. Since then he has tracked me down. I have evaded him and his men, God knows how; but we are tracked down.”

What had happened, as I learned in the after time, was this. Chin-chin-wa had, on leaving us, proceeded at once to the quay.

On the way he had met and passed one of Shan-min-yuen's men. From this he knew that the enemy was already in Tientsin.

He had thought the discovery of this fact fortunate, believing that he was unobserved; but in this he was wrong; the man must immediately have hastened to his master to inform him of our arrival in Tientsin, he being one of many, in all probability, set upon the watch.

Shan-min-yuen had overtaken us by road.

Chin-chin-wa reached the quay; but finding that the captain of the vessel spoken of by Bonsel was dining at the steamship agent's house, he had followed him thither, and with much trouble ultimately arranged what he desired.

Affairs had not been settled in a moment's space of time. Though the tide was, fortunately, well-nigh full, it was a somewhat dangerous proceeding to steam down the river by moonlight, and, for the rest, the vessel had its usual engagements. But as money conquers all things, so it had conquered now; all had been arranged so that we might now start at an early hour.

On the way back to Bonsel's, Chin-chin-wa again met his enemies, and, with great difficulty eluding them, hastened to rejoin us, knowing that our safety depended upon him.

He had been followed, however, so it seemed; and strangely enough it chanced that the end of all was to be under Bonsel's roof. I knew that, for evil or good, the struggle was near at hand.

I stood up and grasped my revolvers, calling to Norris to lie still.

"Take that," I said to Chin-chin-wa, holding a revolver towards him. He did not take it, but grasped his knife in his right hand, as he fixed his eyes upon the door, answering me, briefly—

"Leave *him* to me!"

These were his last words; he had but just spoken, and I had scarcely noticed that Bonsel's face was pale as death with fear when hurried steps outside told us the truth.

The next moment Shan-min-yuen stood upon the threshold, and those who were with him crushed forward.

Bonsel instantly stepped forward, and, as Shan-min-yuen made a step into the room, he cried—

" My guests—do not approach ! "

It was a bold move, and more diplomatic than I could have believed the German capable of; but he had forgotten with whom he had to deal. Almost as he spoke, Shan-min-yuen raised his arm and buried his knife deep in the breast of his defenceless friend.

Bonsel fell back, without a groan, stone dead—a monument to the utter worthlessness of Chinese friendship, and to the folly of placing trust in any of the Chinese race.

I raised my revolver instantly, killing with a couple of shots two of the men who had pressed forward.

I did not fire at Shan-min-yuen, for Chin-chin-wa had said, " Leave him to me."

I do not remember having at any time felt so cool and unexcited as I was then.

A table was in front of me, so that I had a clear advantage. Norris lay upon a sofa behind me.

As the men sprang forward Chin-chin-wa and Shan-min-yuen met in close conflict, whilst my revolver-shots did fearful and immediate work upon the others.

Through the smoke I was yet conscious of a terrible conflict of two men against one; for a second had attacked Chin-chin-wa. I seized my knife and bounded forward, firing with my left

hand, as I did so, my last two shots towards the door. Then I grappled with the man who was attacking Chin-chin-wa.

He turned upon me, but I thrust my knife into his throat for I had the advantage in having come upon him ~~from behind~~.

Now, it seemed to have been a great lull seemed to have been filled with smoke, and terrible still lived on in the wounded who though all was at an end, save struggled with Chin-chin-wa.

Of our party—some living and some dead—heaped and groaning upon the floor; and if there had been others, these had taken flight when they had seen the unerring power of the weapons held by me.

The conflict was now reduced to a fight between two men, both of whom had dropped their knives; and though Chin-chin-wa's strength was greater than that of Shan-min-yuen, it must be remembered that the other was frenzied with passion, and thus had greater power to resist.

There recurred to me the words of Chin-chin-wa when he had received the sentence of exile from Pekin:

"If I meet you, Shan-min-yuen, you and I will test who wins."

That hour had now come.

As I stood thus for a second or two, Chin-

chin-wa slowly overpowered his adversary, crushing back his head with his left hand fixed upon the forehead, and still holding him round the body with his right arm, in vice-like grip; so that though Shan-min-yuen grasped him wildly, his strength slowly left him, and his eyes started from



Crushing back his head with his left hand fixed upon the forehead.—p. 359.

their sockets as the muscles of his neck gave way—and then all was over.

I heard a shout outside.

Chin-chin-wa cast from him the lifeless body.

"The steamer is ready," he cried. "Away from here at once!"

He sprang forward and seized Norris in his arms, carrying him as he had done once before in extremity of danger. I followed him through the door which opened to the back. We passed through some garden plots, and then found ourselves safely upon the road.

We had left to others to look upon the heap of dead and dying in Bonsel's room.

* * * * *

Six weeks later we stood upon the deck of a homeward mail in the harbour of Hong Kong.

I had bid my Shanghai friends farewell when I left their town ; but now a harder task was given to me, as I clasped the hand of Chin-chin-wa.

For the last time I said to him, as I had said more than once in the days gone by, "Come with us to our home !"

He answered me as he had done before.

"No," he said, and there was the depth of a great sorrow in his voice ; "I chose my path. England is not for me ; but you—you will come to see me in the after-years. My home is in Hong Kong : you will come—say ?"

I promised him, earnestly, that I should return more than once. Then Norris stepped forward and took his hand.

"For me," he said, with deep feeling in his voice, "you must forgive me if I cannot bear to look upon this land again!"



Farewell to Chin-chin-wa.—p. 360.

The last moments came, and a sense of isolation came upon me as he took his seat in the sampan that conveyed him to the shore. Only those who have known danger, and faced it by another's side, can understand what my feelings were when I parted from Chin-chin-wa.

As we left the harbour, his last word came sounding from the Praya, across the unripped sea ; and my heart re-echoed his message of—

“ Farewell !”

We stood gazing—with a deep sadness, holding our sight—at him, whose tall form diminished in the distance until we saw him no more ; and still we continued, without speaking, to look upon the receding settlement and the Peak of Hong Kong until, in the falling darkness, all gradually faded away.

Then I turned to Norris with something resembling tears dimming my sight, so that I could not clearly see.

“ I have written,” I said, “ much of what has been. Will you help me to complete the tale? for I would that the world might know something of the existence of that great, good man.”

I do not think that Norris answered me, but I knew that his heart had framed the answer, “ Yes.”

Years have passed since then, yet there are days

in a lifetime which never die, and that on which William Norris and Herbert Vanscombe left Hong Kong is to both as one of these.

Twice in the intervening time Herbert Vanscombe has visited Hong Kong, thus keeping his promise to Chin-chin-wa; and, even now, he is upon the way Eastwards for the third time.

Time had done little to age the strong man, Chin-chin-wa. Still he was, as Herbert Vanscombe found, the man of old—one whose history was a strange one, with the shadow of a strange sorrow cast about it. Yet he who had carved his own path had never swerved. There are but few of us resemble him in this.

Of William Norris?—It has been said that a youthful love affair drove him from his home. That is in the past. Perhaps there was a mistake then: I do not know.

But now, when a certain lady, whose beauty and virtue are famed far and near, is tempted sometimes to mingle with the world, and when people who do not know them say to one another,—“Who is that strange-looking man on whose arm the beauty leans; the man with the white hair and wild strange face?”—there is no prouder woman in all England than she who bears his name as wife.

FINIS.

BY THE SAME AUTHOR.

CHIN-CHIN-WA.

BY CHARLES HANNAN,

Author of "The Captive of Pekin," "The Wooing of Avis Grayle," etc.

A FEW BRIEF EXTRACTS FROM PRESS REVIEWS.

Saturday Review.—"An amusing collection of stories, the most fascinating of which is first."

Daily Chronicle.—"Chin-chin-wa is a cleverly realized study of an Englishman who turns Chinaman. *Ki-su* a sketch with faint yet genuine note of pathos, and *The Ducktrick*, both ingenious and amusing. *The Ducktrick* is capital, every reader must admit that Mr. Hannan's story ends delightfully."

Pall Mall Gazette.—"Eight excellent short stories."

Christian World.—"Three Tales of Indian life, a well-written English Pastoral and an original French story, to our mind the best of the group, indicate the wide range of the author's knowledge and ability."

Bookseller.—"The Narrative of Ruby Garnet is the most original thing in the series, a mystery of rejuvenescence."

Stage.—"All full of interest."

Birmingham Post.—"Undoubtedly ingenious. It is evident the author knows the countries and people he describes. Cleverly plotted stories, certain to arrest and retain the attention of their readers."

Literary World.—"Mr. Hannan's account of the competitive system as practised in China is extremely interesting."

Manchester Guardian.—"Plenty of incident. Many of the plots in this volume are rich in promise."

Western Morning News.—"By an author who has already produced a lot of capital fiction. *Chin-chin-wa* is well told and the author shows his great knowledge of China in another tale, *Ki-su*. Most readers will probably prefer *Lucy Grafton*, a simple and pathetic love story. *Their Hope* is another story showing remarkable literary power. In fact, most of these stories deserve to be read again and again."

Scotaman.—"Natural and realistic—ample variety—all readable."

Glasgow Herald.—"As a fantasia *Ruby Garnet* is fairly effective. *Chin-chin-wa* a fresh and well-told story. *The Ducktrick* a lively tale of Indian jugglery, and *Ki-su* and the two Indian sketches are all excellent."

Globe.—"May safely be ventured upon by lovers of fresh and notable work."

British Review.—"The Ducktrick is as amusing as it is possible to be; we are kept in a state of blissful ferment all through as to the possibility of a solution. Delightful and dramatic."

Liverpool Post.—"An enjoyable medley of Chinese, Indian, English, and French stories; some tragic, one or more of a rather humorous order, and yet others with a marked vein of sadness—all readable."

Athenaeum.—"Well and amusingly told."

Hereford Times.—"A collection of delightful stories. Whether laying the scene in China, India, France, or England, the author is equally happy. A more agreeable companion on a journey or to beguile a leisure hour at home, than *Chin-chin-wa*, it would be difficult to conceive."

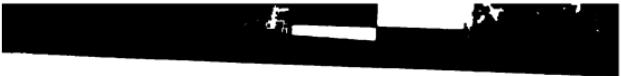
PUBLISHED BY

ARCHIBALD CONSTABLE & Co.,

WESTMINSTER, LONDON.











3 2044 010 412 427

THE BORROWER WILL BE CHARGED
AN OVERDUE FEE IF THIS BOOK IS
NOT RETURNED TO THE LIBRARY ON
OR BEFORE THE LAST DATE STAMPED
BELOW. NON-RECEIPT OF OVERDUE
NOTICES DOES NOT EXEMPT THE
BORROWER FROM OVERDUE FEES.

JUN 24 1988 ILL

